THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

EDITED BY

JAMES HASTINGS, D.D.

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THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

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'THE EXPOSITORY TIMES' 'THE DICTIONARY OF THE BIBLE'
'THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF RELIGION AND ETHICS'
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THE FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES OF ST. PETER
THE EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE

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THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PETER

INTRODUCTION.

'PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.' In these words we have a declaration of the authorship of this Epistle and of its destination. There are other things that we should like to know about it, but we may begin with these two.

1. *Was the author Simon Peter?*—The evidence is both external and internal.

(1) The external authority in favour of the Apostolic authorship is exceedingly strong. It shares with 1st John the privilege of having been received into the Canon when no other Book of the New Testament, except the Gospels and St. Paul's Epistles, was considered entitled to that honour. It was probably known to Clement of Rome, its use by Polycarp is practically certain, and it is expressly mentioned as the work of St. Peter by 2nd Peter and Papias. It is not included in the Muratorian Canon, but it is quoted as St. Peter's by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Tertullian, and is placed by Eusebius among the generally accepted Epistles.

(2) The internal evidence of the Epistle goes far to establish the Petrine authorship. The resemblances to the speeches of St. Peter recorded in Acts are very striking. The position assumed by the writer towards the Christians addressed accords with the situation as set forth in Acts. There is no indication that he was personally acquainted with them, or that he had had any part in their evangelization. The references to our Lord's life and teaching are neither numerous nor obtrusive, but, limited as they are, they serve to endorse the personal contact of the writer with our Lord's ministry. The presence of the eye-witness would seem to be clearly indicated in the allusion to Christ's sufferings; and in ii. 23, 'when he was reviled, reviled not again,' we have possibly a reminiscence of the events of the arrest and trial from one who was actually present. The attitude of the writer towards Gentile Christianity also agrees perfectly with what we learn of St. Peter from Acts. There is the same unhesitating recognition of the labours of those who preached Christ to the Gentiles, and of the equal standing of Gentiles and Jewish Christians.

2. *Was the Epistle written to Jews or Gentiles?*—Most of the Greek Fathers, *e.g.*, Origen (Eus. *H. E.* iii. 1), Didymus and Eusebius (iii. 4), seem to have held the view that St. Peter's readers were Jews by birth. Their opinion was shared by many commentators after the Reformation, such as Erasmus,

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Calvin, Grotius, and Bengel, and it is supported by some recent critics including B. Weiss and Kühl. On the other hand, the Latin Fathers Augustine and Jerome held that it was addressed to Gentile converts (though in one passage, *Viri Illust.* 1, Jerome repeats Origen's statement that St. Peter preached to those of the Circumcision in the dispersion). Most modern critics of all schools support the view that the Epistle was addressed chiefly to Gentiles, although no doubt there were numerous Jewish Christians among them.

But this is a secondary matter compared with a right understanding of the manner in which St. Peter applies to the whole body of the Asiatic Churches, Jews and Gentiles alike, the language which in the Old Testament describes the prerogatives of God's ancient people. The truth is that St. Peter, as doubtless every other Apostle, regarded the Christian Church as first and foremost the true Israel of God, the one legitimate heir of the promises made to Israel, the one community which, by receiving Israel's Messiah, had remained true to Israel's covenant, while the unbelieving Jews in refusing their Messiah had in effect apostatized from Israel. This point of view was not in the least weakened by the admission of Gentile Christians in any number or proportion. In St. Paul's words, they were but branches grafted in upon the one ancient olive tree of God.

3. *When was it written?*—The time of writing must have been about the year A.D. 64. The grim days of trouble under Nero had just begun: Christian men were meeting the first onset of persecution on a large scale. The fire which had been so cruelly kindled at Rome was beginning to spread through the provinces, and frail men and women bearing the Christian name were in need of all the strength and counsel which an Apostle could bestow.

4. *What was the author's reason for writing it?*—Silvanus was about to make a journey. He was either intending to revisit districts where he had already been working (*cf.* v.-12) or, as Dr. Chase suggests (*H.D.B.*, iii. 791), he may have been undertaking the journey as St. Paul's messenger. At any rate St. Peter avails himself of the opportunity afforded by this proposed journey of Silvanus to send a letter to the scattered Christians of the vast district described in the first verse of the Epistle. One of the chief objects of St. Peter's visit to Rome was probably to promote union between Jews and Gentiles in the Church. That object, as we know from Acts, was no less dear to Silvanus. It would therefore be a real strength to him in his mission to the provinces of Asia Minor to have such a letter as this, written by the recognized leader of the Jewish Christians, welcoming the Gentiles as members of the New Israel of God.

Moreover, it was a time of threatened danger and rising persecution. Satan was going about 'desiring to have them' in the smelting fire which was to test their faith. It was therefore a fitting opportunity for St. Peter, who had himself known the shame of falling in the hour of trial, when Satan had 'sifted him as wheat,' to fulfil his Master's command, 'When once thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren.'

The Apostle has a threefold message of encouragement to give to the Churches to which he writes.

(1) *The hope of the inheritance.*—'On earth ye are strangers, there is your home; on earth ye are despised, there is your glory; earth is passing, heaven is eternal.' The Epistle to the Hebrews, also written to a Church about to undergo persecution, is full of the same thought.

(2) *The example of Christ,'* who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross.' We scarcely realize, as we read the descriptions in the Gospels of the physical sufferings of Christ, how every circumstance of those sufferings was reproduced in the lives of those for whom those records were first written. Reproaches died on the lips of those who remembered the silence of Christ; buffetings, scourgings, mockery, were less hard to bear for those who considered Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself. The early Church learned, by the teaching of experience, that the death of the Shepherd did

not purchase for the flock immunity from suffering, but the higher honour of being partaker of all that He bore.

(3) *The certainty that injustice would not go unpunished.*—This confident committing of the cause of the Church to a Faithful Creator was far removed from the outcry for vengeance that makes some of the Psalms so alien from the spirit of Christ. Against such a spirit of revenge the Apostle expressly warns his readers. The unanswered question of iv. 17 has an unmistakable undertone of compassion. We remember, as we read it, the words of the Lord, 'Pray for them that persecute you.' What you suffer, you suffer with Christ, but for them there is no hand to uphold, no uplifted Cross to cheer. Was it this sense of the doom of the persecutors that recalled to the Apostle some unrecorded word of Christ through which shone a hope even for these, since 'He went and preached unto the spirits in prison'?

5. *Where was the Epistle written?*—It is most probable that it was written at Rome, although it is sent from 'Babylon' (v. 13). For, according to a widespread tradition, the Apostle was at Rome during this period. Moreover, ver. 13 apparently refers to Rome as the place of composition under the mystic name 'Babylon.' If, however, 'Babylon' is taken literally it may mean either Babylon on the Euphrates, or a place of the same name in Egypt, near Cairo. There are objections to both views. According to Josephus, the Jewish colony at Babylon had ceased to exist before A.D. 60. On the other hand, it is not likely that 'Babylon,' taken literally, would be used without qualification to denote any place other than the great city on the Euphrates. These difficulties confirm the view that we have here, as in Revelation, a mystical name for Rome.

If St. Peter really wrote from Rome, it may help to explain the many remarkable parallels between this letter and St. Paul's to the Romans and to the Ephesians; whether the latter Apostle at this date was still in the body or already with the Lord, his words remained, and had taken their place as a haunting and dominating expression of the common Christian experience.

That St. Peter visited Rome between the years 62 and 65 A.D. and that he was put to death there by crucifixion is admitted by everyone who studies the evidence in a fair and reasonable spirit. This is not tradition; it may rather be described as a fact vouched for by contemporary or nearly contemporary evidence. On this point no statement could be stronger than that of Professor Lanciani: 'I write about the monuments of Rome from a strictly archæological point of view, avoiding questions which pertain or are supposed to pertain to religious controversy. For the archæologist, the presence and execution of SS. Peter and Paul in Rome are facts established beyond a shadow of doubt by purely monumental evidence.'

¶ Professor Sayce, writing in *The Expository Times* of July 1922, says: 'Among the excavations I saw at Rome the most interesting to me were those underneath the Church of S. Sebastiano. According to tradition, the bodies of SS. Paul and Peter were secreted here at the bottom of a well during the Valerian persecution (A.D. 258), and it was from here that Constantine removed them to his new Basilica on the Vatican. When the modern S. Peter's was built, the sarcophagi were opened in the presence of the Pope, and an eye-witness has left a statement that the bodies were still lying in them intact, with the gold cross placed over them by Constantine, then the sarcophagi were closed again and deposited in the "Confessio" under S. Peter's.'

Now, says Professor Sayce, 'the excavations have brought to light a basilica of the age of Constantine under the modern Church of S. Sebastiano, and under that again the remains of a Roman private house. From the "triclia" or dining-room of this there is a descent into a long corridor, where two or three large Christian stone sarcophagi were lying. Beyond these the corridor extended to a niche-like chamber by the side of the bottom of a well. The walls of the corridor are covered with the graffiti of Christian visitors from the middle of the third century onwards, commemorating their visits to the bodies of

the Apostles and invoking their prayers. In many cases it is stated that before descending into the catacomb the pilgrims had partaken of a "refrigeratio" (refreshment) in the triclia above, which is explained as the Agapê, thus showing that the Agapê was still observed in Rome at the end of the third century. Once more archaeology has confirmed tradition, and the bodies of the Apostles are actually lying under S. Peter's.'[1]

6. *Its characteristics.*

(1) First, *a melodious note of exultation,* notsodefiant as inthe Apocalyse,rings through the Epistle. There has been a great deliverance, partly enjoyed in the present, but on the eve of full accomplishment. The revelation of the glory of Jesus Christ is not far distant. Some tremendous facts lie behind this conviction, for the hoped-for salvation is no new thing, but is so important that all history has been converging upon it (i. 10-12). These facts constitute the gospel, which is the word of the living God. There has ever been but one Word of God, whether in the old Israel or in the new (i. 23-25), and as it had come to the prophet in days past, so the gospel was preached to these Gentiles as a living power.

(2) Another striking feature of the Epistle is *its allusiveness.* 'To know these thickly crowded lines truly would be to know the Gospel.' The great truths of Christianity are dealt with in a way which presupposes that the reader is already familiar with them. Indeed, it may almost be asserted that the Epistle presupposes acquaintance on the part of the readers with the Epistle to the Romans, the teaching of whole sections of which is sometimes summed up in a single paragraph. Compare, for instance, ch. ii. 8-10 with Ro. ix; ch. ii. 13, 14 with Ro. xiii. 1-7; ch. ii. 24 with Ro. vi. 1-14; and ch. iii. 18 with Ro. v. 6-10.

(3) Again, no reader can fail to mark the tone of *tenderness and sympathy* that pervades the Epistle. It is truly pastoral in its expression of the loving anxiety of the writer to cheer and strengthen the Churches before whom lies the fiery trial of persecution. As Paul and Silas sang songs in the prison, so the music of thanksgiving and praise wells up in this Epistle, till the present pain and the sharpness of the Cross are forgotten in the glory of the ascended Christ. In this way, the Epistle is a practical application to the special difficulties of the time of the teaching of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

To a student of the earlier life of the Apostle Peter it would have seemed in the highest degree unlikely that one so impulsive, so rough-handed, so fond of action, should have been selected to write some of the tenderest and most consolatory words that have ever fallen on the ears of suffering and persecuted saints. Yet so it befell. And we are left to infer how keenly this strong nature must have suffered before it could have become so sweetened and softened, so humble and tender, as to afford a soil for the luxuriant growth of the balsam and spicery of Divine Comfort. Very different was this Apostle of Jesus Christ, when he wrote this Epistle, from the fisherman who girded himself in early life to his toils—from the disciple who abandoned all to follow the Master with enthusiastic ardour. Frost and fire had disintegrated the rock. Age had diminished the writer's strength, taken the sparkle from his eye, sown his head with grey, and bowed his frame. His self-reliance had learnt to cling to a stronger than himself, his wisdom to defer to a wiser. The asperities and ruggedness of his character had been toned and mellowed by suffering and sorrow, as the tints of a picture are softened by the breath of years. In the deepest sense he was 'converted' at last, that he might set himself to strengthen his brethren (Lk. xxii. 32).

(4) Another characteristic feature of the Epistle is the *stress laid on the duty of submission.* The injustice of the persecution with which the readers were threatened might provoke resentment and reckless outbreaks of denunciation and protest, which would only serve to feed the fires of heathen hostility. But submission is not only the mark of the Christian as he stands before rulers and kings; it is to enter into all the relations of life in family, household and Church. The true

[1] *The Expository Times,* xxxiii. 433.

democracy is not the state where all rule, but the state where all obey.

¶ If we ought to be, and desire to be, obedient and submit unto God, we must also submit to what we receive at the hands of any of His creatures, or our submission is all false. From this latter article floweth true humility, as indeed it doth also from the former. And unless this verily ought to be, and were wholly agreeable to God's justice, Christ would not have taught it in words, and fulfilled it in His life.[1]

The Elect.

1 Pet. i. 1.—'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect.'

1. Two great forms of Divine 'election' are spoken of in the Old Testament—the choosing of Israel, and the choosing of single Israelites or bodies of Israelites to perform functions for Israel.

(1) Of the latter, examples are: Abraham (Neh. ix. 7), Moses (Ps. cvi. 23), Saul (1 Sam. x. 24), David (2 Sam. vi. 21 [*cf.* 1 Sam. xvi. 8, 10]; 1 Chron. xxviii. 4; Ps. lxxviii. 70; lxxxix. 3; Jer. xxxiii. 24 [David's house]), Solomon (1 Chron. xxviii. 5f. [*cf.* 10]; xxix. 1), Zerubbabel (Hag. ii. 23), the tribe of Judah (1 Chron. xxviii. 4; Ps. lxxviii. 67f.), Aaron (1 Sam. ii. 28; Ps. cv. 26), and the Levites (1 Chron. xv. 2; 2 Chron. xxix, 11; Jer. xxxiii. 24).

(2) St. Peter has in mind the choosing of Israel. That he is here following the Old Testament in its idea of a chosen people, not merely an assemblage of chosen men, is a natural inference from ii. 9f., where 'an elect [or chosen] race' is one of the phrases taken directly from Is. xliii. 20. He has been preceded by St. Paul in the central chapters of Romans, ix.-xi., which set forth the relation of Jew to Gentile in the eternal counsel of God. In xi. 28 St. Paul refers to the original election of Israel, while in xi. 5, 7 he speaks of a new election, that of the spiritual Israel; and it is to this new Israel, or to a part of it, that St. Peter addresses himself.

[1] *Theologia Germanica*, 125.

'Elect,' in fact, means simply Christian. What the Apostle is thinking of is corporate citizenship among the elect people; the individual elements of the new life are faith and obedience.

2. In Deuteronomy (iv. 37) the choosing by God is ascribed to His own 'love' of Israel: the ground of it lay in Himself, not in Israel; it was not a reward. In Is. xliii. 21, as quoted significantly in ii. 9, a further motive is stated, to 'shew forth his excellencies': God's choosing is not for the sake of His chosen alone; they are chosen because He has a special ministry for them to perform towards the surrounding multitude. As is the election of ruler or priest within Israel for the sake of Israel, such is the election of Israel for the sake of the whole human race. Such also, still more clearly and emphatically, is the election of the new Israel. Nor is the principle of less validity in respect of the individual members of the new chosen race. Each stone in the spiritual house of God has its own place to fill, and was chosen by God for that place. Each member of Christ's spiritual body has its own work to do, and was chosen by God for that work.

So the word 'elect,' rightly interpreted, is one of the most comforting words of the New Testament vocabulary, and it is meant for comfort here. Something not themselves had taken hold of them. Someone greater than man, the Sovereign of all the nations, had set His choice upon them, and grace and peace flowed from the very thought. When the Christ was in the world and spoke of leaving it, some of His hearers did not understand Him and asked, 'Will he go unto the dispersed?' In another and a better sense than these men dreamed of, He is indeed gone unto the dispersed: He has found them in their solitudes and He will not fail them nor forsake them. They are scattered but they are elect; though the world breaks up, the Son of Man 'shall gather together his elect from the four winds.' And even scattered souls are safe, and the helpless are stronger than the strong, when they know themselves grasped by the one Hand that can hold them

'amid the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds.'

3. In the opening verses of this Epistle we are told:

(1) *The source of election.*—It is 'according to the foreknowledge of God.' This calling of men is not an afterthought, a detached link, a transient isolated act with no organic connection between it and the past and the future. Our salvation originates, has its sole cause, in the Divine Mind. Our election, our calling in time, is directly traceable to God; accordingly to Him is due all the praise and the glory of our salvation. And this is indeed the kernel, the central significance, of election —the exclusion of all boasting on the part of man and the corresponding ascription of all glory to God's grace, a truth equally emphasized in practice by the two systems of thought known respectively as Calvinism and Arminianism. God is the cause, the only cause, and the whole cause, of every man's salvation: that is the essence of the doctrine of election as taught in the Bible and as confessed by all believers alike.

¶ The Gospel is sometimes presented as if it were an Insurance Institution against an impending calamity, instead of the heart of divine love breaking itself in its absorbing desire to save a sinful world. Election, that is, the sovereignty of grace, is made the handmaid of pride instead of that of humility. Its meaning in the Bible is 'Whatever may be good in me comes from God.'[1]

(2) *The means of election.*—'Elect through (or 'in') the sanctification of the Spirit.' To discuss the doctrine of election as an eternal internal act of Godhead, a doctrine separate, complete, and perfect in itself, is a gross mistake. Election, whether in its eternal or in its temporal aspect, sustains a close relation to the Son and the Spirit as well as to the Father. The doctrine of Election should never be separated from the doctrine of Sanctification through the Spirit and that of Justification by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. 'Elect through (in) sanctification of the Spirit.' Election first shows itself, then, in a man's separation from the world which lieth in wickedness. This is the first half of the meaning of the term 'sanctification,' if not the whole meaning, as used in the Old Testament, the phraseology of which has pervaded and tinctured every fibre of St. Peter's mental constitution. The sanctification of the temple, its vessels, and its priests, means their dedication to the service of God, and their withdrawal from secular purposes. And Christian believers are thus set apart by the Spirit, spiritually consecrated to Divine service.

(3) *The end of election.*—'Elect unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ'—a sentence difficult enough to unravel and explain, but the main bearing of which, nevertheless, is evident. Election has for its object our obedience in a twofold sense. First, 'the obedience of faith,' the obedience of which faith is the substance, the obedience we render God when we believingly receive the truths of the gospel. 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' Second, the obedience which faith produces. Not only an unwavering conviction of the truth of the gospel, but also an earnest persistent endeavour to discharge faithfully all the duties it imposes upon us. A firm persuasion of the electing love of God, coupled with an experimental proof in our own consciousness of the sanctifying, elevating influence of the Divine Spirit acts as a powerful incentive, not to indolence, but to strenuous striving after greater devotedness to God and wider usefulness to man.

¶ The elect are nowhere elected for themselves. They are chosen as handers on of the good gifts to their fellows. No man invents, discovers a thing for his profit alone. He cannot do it if he would. The laws of his own nature and of the world outside him compel him to be a purveyor. His discovery becomes at once the property of mankind. A Newton, a Kepler, explore the heavens, and the new light they draw thence enlightens the world. Watt and Stephenson find the uses of steam as a force generator, and all the continents are covered with railways. Marconi wins the secret of wireless telegraphy, and

[1] J. Ker, *Thoughts for Heart and Life*, 203.

ships at sea are rescued by it from the devouring fire and the engulfing wave. And the saint, finding in his soul a new experience of God, a glorious access of spiritual power, can keep no movement of it to himself. He becomes to his fellows a centre of warmth and light; the hungry multitude rushes to feed upon the divine bread he dispenses.[1]

And as, for all its vastness, the great sea,
Bathing the whole world's shore, wave upon wave
Will press its waters into some small cave,
To reach each corner's dim intricacy,
And set the stranded water-creatures free,—
So Thou, Eternal Goodness, Who dost lave
Thine universe in Beauty—I am brave,
Since that Thy gracious streams flowed unto me,
To wait Thy capture of each dark recess,
Where thoughts, untouched by Thee, their low ways creep:
Penetrate even there, and cleanse and bless.
And, on the breast of Thy victorious tides,
Bear out, to seek Thy paths in the great deep,
All that, in selfish isolation, hides.[2]

Sojourners.

1 Pet. i. 1.—'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners (AV 'strangers') of the Dispersion.'

'STRANGERS': the literal and the spiritual blend here. Some of the provinces to which those Christians belonged were fair, the climate was balmy, and the mountains were glorious. Yet none of these tracts was their fatherland. St. Peter, who knew Scripture so well, would remind them of Abraham, rising up with a riven heart from before his dead, and saying to the children of Heth, 'I am a stranger and a sojourner with you.' He would let them hear something of the wailing pathos of the psalm: 'I am a stranger with thee, a sojourner, as all my fathers were.' His meaning is that of the old Christian apologist. 'Christians inhabit their own land, but as sojourners. They share in all things outwardly as citizens, and endure all things as strangers. Every foreign land is theirs, and every land foreign.' Home is the one thing sweet on earth. But home is built not of stones, but of hearts. And hearts are breaking and ceasing to beat every year, as the patriarch knew who first used the word.

All those who really have faith in Jesus Christ are 'strangers of the Dispersion'; scattered throughout the world, and dwelling dispersedly in an order of things to which they do not belong, 'seeking a city which hath foundations.' The word 'strangers' means, originally, persons for a time living in an alien city. And that is the idea that the Apostle would impress upon us as true for each of us, in the measure in which our Christianity is real. For, although all men may be truly spoken of as being 'pilgrims and sojourners upon the earth' by reason of both the shortness of the duration of their earthly course and the disproportion between their immortal part and the material things among which they dwell, St. Peter is thinking of something very different from either the brevity of earthly life or the infinite necessities of an immortal spirit when he calls his Christian brethren strangers. Not because we are men, not because we are to die soon and the world is to outlast us; not because other people will one day live in our houses and read our books and sit upon our chairs, and we shall be forgotten, but because we are Christ's people, are we here sojourners. Not because our immortal soul cannot satisfy itself, however it tries, with the trivialities of earth, but because new desires, tastes, aspirations, affinities, have been kindled in us by the new life that has flowed into us—therefore the connection that other men have with the world, which makes some of them altogether 'men of the world, whose portion is in this life,' is for us broken, and we are strangers, scattered abroad, solitary. Not by reason of the inevitable loneliness in which, after all love and companionship, every soul lives, not by reason of losses or deaths, but by reason of the contrariety between the foundation of our lives and the foundation

[1] J. Brierley, *Faith's Certainties*, 223.
[2] *In the House of My Pilgrimage*, 88.

of the lives of the men round us—therefore we stand lonely in the midst of crowds, strangers in the ordered communities of the world.

1. Let us try to keep vivid and sharp a sense of our separation. This does not mean that we should withdraw ourselves from sympathies, or from services, or from the large area of common ground which, whether they be Christians or no, we have with our fellows, with those who are related to us by various bonds, by community of purpose, aim, opinion, or affection. But just as Abraham was willing to go down into the plain and fight for Lot though he would not go down and live in Sodom, and just as he would enter into relations of amity with the men of the land and yet would not abandon his black camel's-hair tent, pitched beneath the terebinth tree, in order to go into their city and abide with them, so one great part of the wisdom of a Christian man is to draw the line of separation decisively and yet keep true to the bond of union. Unless Christian people do make a distinct effort to keep themselves apart from the world and its ways, they will get confounded with these.

2. Again, if we are strangers of the Dispersion, let us live by our own country's laws, and not by the codes that are current in this foreign land where we are settled for a time. What was the complaint of the people of Persia to Esther's king? 'There is a people whose laws are different from all the peoples that be upon the earth.' That was an offence that could not be tolerated in a despotism that ground everything down to the one level of a slavish uniformity. It will be well for us Christian people if men look at us, and say, 'Ah, that man has another rule of conduct from the one that is general. I wonder what is the underlying principle of his life; it evidently is not the same as mine.'

¶ What have you done to-day that nobody but a Christian would do?[1]

[1] M. D. Babcock, *Thoughts for Every-Day Living*, 133.

3. Lastly, let us be glad when we think, and let us often think, of the home in glory. That is a beautiful phrase which pairs off with the one in the text, in which another Apostle speaks of the ultimate end as 'our gathering together in Christ.' All the scattered ones, like chips of wood in a whirlpool, drift gradually closer and closer, until they unite in a solid mass in the centre. So at the last the 'strangers' are to be brought and settled in their own land, and their lonely lives are to be filled with happy companionship, and they to be in a more blessed unity than now. 'Fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.' If we, dwelling in this far-off land, were habitually to talk as Australians do of coming to England as 'going home,' though born in the colony, it would be a glad day for us when we set out on the journey. If Christian people lived more by faith, as they profess to do, and less by sight, they would oftener think of the home-coming and the union. They would be happy when they thought that they were here but for a while, and when they realized these two blessed elements of permanence and of companionship which another Apostle packs into one sentence, along with that which is greater than them both, 'so shall we ever be with the Lord.'

¶ In the cloisters of Canterbury there is an epitaph cut in the stone over Dean Alford's grave, which a Christian might well write over the doorway of the office where he works and of the chamber where he lies down to sleep. The words are: *Diversorium viatoris Hierosolymam proficiscentis*—the inn of a traveller on his way to Jerusalem.[1]

For thee, O dear, dear country,
Mine eyes their vigils keep;
For very love, beholding
The happy name, they weep;
The mention of thy glory
Is unction to the breast,
And medicine in sickness,
And love, and life, and rest.

O sweet and blessèd country,
The home of God's elect!

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 52.

O sweet and blessèd country,
That eager hearts expect!
Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest,
Who art, with God the Father
And Spirit, ever blest.[1]

The Dispersion.

1 Pet. i. 1.—'Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to the elect, who are sojourners of the Dispersion.' (RV).

'DISPERSION' is a technical term and comprises in itself all the Jews who lived outside Palestine. The term is Jewish through and through, for it insists upon the First Cause of all such scattering and upon the central shrine from which the exiles are removed. The mere Greek spoke and thought of exiles as fugitives and had a collective term Flight to correspond with the Jewish Dispersion. But the Jewish word recognizes that those dispersed are placed here and there—as exiles, traders, and what not?—by God.

The collective term, 'the Dispersion,' implies the real unity of these scattered communities, whose scattering is no longer regarded as God's punishment for sin. It thus serves well the purposes of one who, like St. Paul, insists on the unity of the whole brotherhood of Christians.

¶ At the time when this Epistle was written three chief divisions of the Dispersion were recognized—the Babylonian, which ranked as the first, the Syrian, and the Egyptian. But the Diaspora was by no means confined to these three centres. About two hundred years before this time the composer of one of the so-called Sibylline Oracles could address the Jewish nation, and say, 'But every land is full of thee—aye and every ocean.' And there is abundance of evidence, both in the Bible and outside it, especially in Josephus and Philo, that such language does not go beyond the limits of justifiable hyperbole.[2]

But St. Peter gives a wider extension to the word. It is probable that proselytes formed the nucleus of the Christian Churches in the Asiatic Provinces. Attracted by the monotheistic teaching of Judaism, they were ready to welcome a gospel that transformed monotheism from a dead dogma into a living truth. The proselyte was thus a link of connexion between Jew and Gentile, and through him the Church entered into the inheritance of the Jewish title—'elect strangers of the dispersion.' If this is the true explanation, the Epistle would seem to have been written at a time when the severance between Judaism and Christianity had become complete, and the truth fully recognized that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek.

The Provinces.—In New Testament times there was no general name in use corresponding to Asia Minor; hence the list which follows our text is the natural way of describing that area. It does not include some of the smaller districts of Asia Minor, but it may not have been thought necessary to make the list exhaustive. Cilicia was, perhaps, rather grouped with Syria, as in Acts xv. 23, 41; Gal. i. 21. Thus the letter is addressed to churches dispersed over an area from twice to four times as large as that of the British Isles. It included some of the wealthiest and most cultured cities of the Empire, and was inhabited by many different races, among whom Greeks and Greek-speaking Jews were the most important. Most of the churches in Asia Minor had been founded either by St. Paul himself or by his converts; and in many districts Christianity had grown rapidly and flourished exceedingly.

If the order is not that of a distant prospect in imagination but of an actual intended journey, it answers precisely to a course which would naturally be followed by one landing at a seaport of Pontus, making a circuit through the principal known or probable seats of Christian communities, and returning to the neighbourhood of the Euxine. Moreover, some such cause, due to practical motives, is needed to account for the remarkable severance of Pontus and Bithynia, which stand at the beginning and the end of the list respectively,

[1] Bernard of Cluny.
[2] A. Plummer.

although they together formed but a single province, and every other province received but a single name. The contemplated journey is doubtless that of Silvanus, by whom the Epistle was to be conveyed (v. 12). Provincial Pontus, that is, the seaboard of the district best known as Paphlagonia, contained several ports at which Silvanus might naturally enter Asia Minor, the most important being Sinope, which was a Roman colony. Such a route would, however, be out of the question if he were proceeding from Babylon; while it needs no further explanation than the active commerce between the harbours of Pontus and the West if the starting-point was Rome.

(1) *Pontus.*—Pontus had been conquered from Mithradates by Pompey in the year 65 B.C., and while the inland part was allowed to remain for a time practically independent, the northern coast district was annexed to Bithynia, retaining its own and some measure of local independence. Along this coast were a number of large and prosperous Greek cities, of which Sinope, Heraclea, and Amisos were the most important, carrying on the commerce of the Euxine. The Greek commercial cities of Asia Minor generally had a considerable resident Jewish population, and we hear of Jews from Pontus being at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Aquila, St. Paul's friend, is also described as a Jew, a man of Pontus by race (Ac. xviii. 2). The province is of interest through two later associations. It was from Pontus that Pliny wrote the letter to which Trajan's famous Rescript was a reply. From this letter we gather that by A.D. 112 Christianity had taken deep root in the province. It included many of all ages and every rank, and even of both sexes. It had been established there for a considerable time, for Pliny mentions one case of a suspect who asserted that he had abandoned Christianity twenty years ago, and on arriving in the district Pliny apparently found the machinery of persecution ready to start in full working order as soon as official sanction was given.

(2) *Galatia.*—The Roman province of Galatia included all the central part of Asia Minor and extended from Pontus on the North to the Taurus Mountains on the South. It embraced Paphlagonia, part of the old kingdom of Pontus, part of Phrygia including Antioch and Iconium, and part of Lycaonia including Lystra and Derbe; but it derived its name from the north central district, Galatia proper, which had been occupied by Gaulish immigrants in the 3rd century B.C. They were conquered by the Romans under Manlius in 189 B.C., but retained semi-independence until 25 B.C., when Galatia proper was made a Roman province. The chief towns in this district were Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium. The southern part of the Roman province of Galatia was certainly evangelized by St. Paul during his first missionary journey. Lightfoot and others hold that St. Paul also visited Galatia proper on his second and third journeys, and that the Epistle to the Galatians was addressed to that district, but Ramsay and others maintain that St. Paul wrote to the churches of the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia and never visited the northern district at all.

(3) *Cappadocia.*—Cappadocia was the inland district east of Galatia and south of Pontus, formed into a Roman province in A.D. 17. Jews from Cappadocia were present on the day of Pentecost (Ac. ii. 9). The district is not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament, and nothing is known as to the first introduction of Christianity into the province; nor is it conspicuous in the history of the Church in the first two centuries.

(4) *Asia.*—The Roman province of Asia included all Asia Minor west of Galatia. Ephesus had by this time supplanted the older capital, Pergamos, as the administrative centre of the province. St. Paul was forbidden of the Spirit to preach the word in Asia on his second missionary journey, but on his third journey he spent two years and three months at Ephesus, so that 'all Asia heard the word of God.' The Churches of Asia were specially rich in Apostolic admonitions. The Epistles to the Ephesians (probably a circular letter to the Churches of the Lycus valley), to the Colossians and to Philemon attest St. Paul's care for his Asiatic converts, and the two Epistles to Timothy throw light on the

religious problems of the Ephesian Church at a rather later date. St. Peter's letter was probably written a few years later still, and the letters to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse are the final message of the Apostolic age to this province. There is no reason to doubt the tradition that St. John spent his old age at Ephesus, and guided the development of the Episcopal system in the province. After the Epistles of Ignatius, the Churches of Asia sink into comparative obscurity as the newer Churches of Carthage, Alexandria, and Rome rise into importance.

(5) *Bithynia.* — Bithynia had been bequeathed to the Romans by its last king, Nicomedes III., in 74 B.C., and was joined with Pontus and formed into a united province by Pompey in 65 B.C. St. Paul attempted to enter Bithynia when precluded from preaching in Asia on his second missionary journey, but 'the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not' (Acts xvi. 7). We have no evidence to show how Christianity was introduced there, but there were two great roads connecting its chief towns, Nicæa and Nicomedia, with Antioch in Pisidia in the South and Ancyra and Syria in the East.

¶ The enormous significance of the Dispersion as a preparation for Christianity must not be overlooked. It showed to both Jew and Gentile alike that the barriers which had hedged in and isolated the hermit nation had broken down, and that what had ceased to be thus isolated had changed its character. A *kingdom* had become a *religion*. What henceforth distinguished the Jews in the eyes of all the world was not their country or their government, but their creed, and through this they exercised upon those among whom they were scattered an influence which had been impossible under the old conditions of exclusiveness. They themselves also were forced to understand their own religion better. When the keeping of the letter of the Law became an impossibility, they were compelled to penetrate into its spirit; and what they exhibited to the heathen was not a mere code of burdensome rites and ceremonies, but a moral life and a worship in spirit and truth. The universality of the services of the synagogue taught the Jew that God's worship was not confined to Jerusalem, and their simplicity attracted proselytes who might have turned away from the complex and bloody liturgies of the Temple. Even in matters of detail the services in the synagogue prepared the way for the services of the Christian Church. The regular lessons—read from two divisions of Scripture, the antiphonal singing, the turning towards the east, the general Amen of the whole congregation, the observance of the third, sixth, and ninth hours as hours of prayer, and of one day in seven as specially holy—all these things, together with some others which have since become obsolete, meet us in the synagogue worship, as St. James knew it, and in the liturgies of the Christian Church, which he and the Apostles and their successors helped to frame. Thus justice once more became mercy, and a punishment was turned into a blessing. The captivity of the Jew became the freedom of both Jew and Gentile, and the scattering of Israel was the gathering in of all nations unto God.[1]

Sanctification.

1 Pet. i. 2.—'Through (RV 'in') sanctification of the Spirit.'

WHAT are the landmarks in the way of sanctification?

1. *Consecration.*—The primary idea of consecration is separation to God's service, and it is applied not only to persons, but to places, to days, and to things. One day out of every seven in the old Jewish Calendar, as in the Church of Christ, is set apart from the rest of the week to be in a special sense God's day, to be observed by obedience to a special law of separation. Places and things were consecrated of old—the Temple, the Altar, the Holy of Holies were set apart for God; that is, these special places were solemnly separated from all secular uses and dedicated to the service of the Most High. Persons also were separated; the Levites, and within the tribe of Levi the family of Aaron, were set apart for the service of the Sanctuary.

[1] A. Plummer.

Sanctification, then, is that act of God whereby He separates any portion of time, any place, any thing, any person to be specially dedicated to Himself. It was in this sense that the Psalmist prayed, 'Preserve my soul; for I am holy.' He did not mean that he had attained to stainless purity of character; what he saw was the grandeur and the danger of his position as one who was consecrated to God. It was indeed a glorious fact for him to know that he was separated unto God; but then the measure of the greatness of his high calling was the measure of his danger, for sin in him would be of the nature of sacrilege. So he cried in conscious realization of his peril, 'Preserve my soul; for I am holy.' O God, Thou hast consecrated me to Thyself, preserve this consecrated personality from all sacrilegious defilement of sin.

¶ Consecration involves to my mind the duty of every Christian man to place himself and all he possesses, life included, fully and freely, without reserve, at the service of God —literally—here and now. That has always been the meaning of Consecration to me. It has seemed to be a mere sham and pretence on any other interpretation. Is not this what Paul means when he says, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service'? To Paul it meant that and nothing else; he illustrated his meaning by his own life, and was followed closely in this track by his fellow-Apostles; and multitudes more have been following on in the same lines from that day to this.

If it does not signify that a man, on becoming a Christian, becomes voluntarily under obligation to serve his King with all the capacity, goods, influence, time, and anything else he may possess which is likely to advance the interest of his Master, I don't know what it does mean, neither do I understand the passages scattered so freely through both Old and New Testaments insisting on the same thing under the peril of all sorts of losses—too many for me even to allude to.[1]

[1] *William Booth*, ii. 196.

2. *Creation.*—The Spirit not only separates us unto God, He creates in us a sanctified character. We are not days, or buildings, or things, we are men and women, so that, if we are to live the consecrated life, we must not only be the subjects of a separating and consecrating act, we must be dowered with special powers, enabling us in character and conduct to correspond with this act of consecration. So the Spirit within us is the creative Spirit, creating in us a sanctified character. He does this in two ways.

(1) First of all, the Spirit gives us *life*. Just as in natural birth we become partakers of natural life by being linked by the chain of generation reaching through the ages to the first Adam, so by the new birth 'of water and of the Spirit' we become partakers of the Divine Life; and because we are then united supernaturally to Him who is the Second Adam there is communicated to us in the power of the Spirit that gift which we call grace—for grace is nothing else but this, the energy of Divine Life communicated in measure to each of the elect of God.

¶ Grace, at its fountain-head, is the beauty of God, the beauty of His character. Grace in us, so far as it shows there, is the reflection of the beauty, its implantation and growth in us. And the beauty spreads into all the spheres of life. There are no really fine manners that do not come from a beautiful soul. The peasant who has that is a truer gentleman than the man who, without it, has all the polish of the schools. This inner beauty flows into the face, chisels its features into refinement, gives melody to the voice. Have you noticed how a deed of heroism has the same effect on you as the glory of a sunset, or a strain of noble music? What is the glow of feeling there, common to them all, but a revelation of their unity of origin? It will be the sense of this unity that, in the coming years, will bring art, music, science, industry, and the whole conduct of life into one great synthesis. It will be this unity that will build for us beautiful cities, that will create beautiful bodies for beautiful souls; that will subdue coarseness to refinement; that will raise the common action of humanity from its

present discords and dissonances into its predestined harmony. With all this men will reach to new perceptions of beauty; a finer vision will disclose finer forms of it. In the end, man will be satisfied with nothing less than its highest form. From all the infinite charms of earth, the soul, athirst for perfection, will still lift its eyes to the heavens, will whisper its aspiration: 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee!' For it perceives that the one beauty that alone can satisfy it is the beauty of holiness—the grace, the beauty of God.[1]

(2) But He gives to us not only grace, He gives us also *virtues*. The theological definition of a virtue is as follows: *Virtus est quâ recte vita vivitur*—'A virtue is that through which I am enabled to live my life aright.' Virtues are to the spiritual life what senses are to the natural life. We could hardly conceive of a person having a frame instinct with life, but without senses, no eyes to see, no ears to hear, no hands wherewith to touch; if such an one existed in this crowded, bustling world, his life would be a very transitory one, but a very painful one while it lasted, for he would be continually coming into collision with things with which collision would be unpleasant and dangerous. In other words, it is an absolute necessity that we should have not only a frame instinct with physical energy, but also certain senses which will enable us to live our sentient life obedient to the laws of natural existence. It is precisely the same in the spiritual life, and therefore God gives those who are brought into union with Christ three virtues —Faith, Hope, and Love.

3. *Ability.*—It is through the Holy Spirit that we receive life and power to live aright, yet, if the three infused virtues are to be brought into active play, we must experience in another way the power of the Holy Ghost. It is He who draws out the music of that sanctified nature which He has created. Every regenerate soul is like a beautiful organ; it is the embodied thought of the great Master Builder, Christ Himself, expressed through the creative power of the Spirit. What capabilities of harmonious sound lie latent in every organ; yet if music is to be drawn out of it, it can only be through these two conditions—the notes must be touched by a musician's hand, and the wind must make them vocal. So it is with us. Jesus, in the power of His Spirit, is for ever touching each individual soul with the purpose of drawing out of him the music, the unequalled music, of a saintly character and a saintly life; and as He touches each, He makes His touch effectual by the continued action on the soul of the grace of the Holy Spirit acting on our inner spirits as the Wind of God. So, through His power, there rises to God from the sanctified nature the beautiful music of sanctity.

When thou turn'st away from ill,
Christ is this side of thy hill.

When thou turnest toward good,
Christ is walking in thy wood.

When thy heart says, 'Father, pardon!'
Then the Lord is in thy garden.

When stern Duty wakes to watch,
Then his hand is on the latch.

But when Hope thy song doth rouse,
Then the Lord is in the house.

When to love is all thy wit,
Christ doth at thy table sit.

When God's will is thy heart's pole,
Then is Christ thy very soul.[1]

The Living Hope.

1 Pet. i. 3.—'Who according to his great mercy begat us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'

THINK for a moment to whom the Apostle is writing. In earlier years these Asiatics had been dwelling in paganism. They had enjoyed the privileges of the art and literature, the poetry and philosophy of an era famous for its culture; but they had no living hope either for this life or for a life to come.

[1] J. Brierley, *Faith's Certainties*, 231.

[1] George Macdonald.

Politics were represented by the absolutism of the Emperor, by the military domination and civil privileges of comparatively few Roman citizens, by the serfdom of the oppressed subjects and downtrodden provincials. Their religion was bankrupt in spiritual force and in moral elevation. Paganism was rotten to its core. It was absorbed in material and sensuous interests. Philosophers identified the worship of the gods with a superstition that degraded the intellect of the intelligent and with obscenities that polluted the morals of the multitude. The splendid theory of immortality was treasured by a learned few—a theory unascertained and unascertainable. Despair had settled down on men's souls. Upon this welter of moral darkness shone forth the Easter Light of the World; the resurrection of Jesus Christ began a new era—it brought a living hope to the children of men.

1. The resurrection of Jesus is the crowning triumph of life in the created universe. We look back to the beginning of things, to the shapeless chaos, to the primeval fire-mist and the stage of glowing matter: and behind all the first movements of creation we discern a Divine Life. Out of the dull, inert mass world after world emerges, evolved in order and beauty.

'Let there be light': and lo! 'there was light.' But God's supreme creation is life: and the birth of life is a mystery like all births. How, when, where, we ask, did life emerge in the Universe? And when did that other creation take place, whereby to animal sensation there was added the gift of mind, 'the breath of life' of a spirit conscious of itself, the world and God? Here is another beginning, another emergence of life, due to the all-pervading, imminent life of God. And so we arrive at the consummation of the scheme of the universe in the self-consciousness of man, the first Adam, who 'became a living soul.' But not to rest there: for the first Adam is not God's perfect gift: that we find in the Second Adam, who 'became a quickening Spirit,' God's greatest manifestation of life on the plane of human history. Where life has conquered all along the line, death cannot prevail: and the whole process of creation is carried to completion and vindication by the resurrection of the Son of Man from the grave.

¶ The Resurrection is the expression and consummation of reconcilement. It is a reality already in the person of Christ. God, who is the Creator of the material and spiritual—former of bodies, father of spirits—has united them to each other in Him, and both to Himself in close eternal union. Is not this credible, probable, true, because God-like and grand, an end to the universe worthy of our highest thinking and of its Author? This reconcilement of the material and spiritual in Christ is not merely a prophecy and pledge of the end but the means of it. 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.' All flows from this as streams from a fountain, light from a sun, life from God, for He is constituted the Head of the regenerated universe.[1]

2. The resurrection of Jesus receives its crowning witness and reveals its true meaning in the renewal of our inner life. To St. Paul our Lord's resurrection was a great dynamic: to St. Peter it meant a rebirth of the soul unto a living hope. Both Apostles traced their own spiritual regeneration to the energies of their Risen Master. To the Christians of Asia St. Paul exclaims, 'You hath he quickened who were dead through trespasses and sins,' dead to the motives and impulses of a holy life, insensible to God's touch and ministry. What brought the great change? It was the power of Christ's resurrection, the new spiritual force and impulse begotten in human hearts by the ever-living Christ. 'Reckon yourselves dead unto sin,' he writes to the Christians at Rome, 'but alive unto God': this is the result of all true spiritual transformation—evil meeting with no response, failing to touch and corrupt a man's heart, assaulting him in vain, like waves beating upon a rock which abides unmoved. Note again the words, 'alive unto God'—the soul, quickened and new, sensitive and responsive to the Divine touch, like a harp to its player, absorbing naturally and simply

[1] J. Ker, *Thoughts for Heart and Life*, 171.

the impressions of the unseen beauty, goodness and truth. Everywhere the Apostles saw men 'rise on stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things'—to a new life, lifted out of the grave of an unholy career into a noble and saintly manhood. How was it accomplished? It was due not to the memory of a dead hero, worshipped and idealized, but to the vivifying power, the transfiguring energies of the ever-living Christ, with whom by faith they were united. They never think—these Christians of the New Testament—of Christ as departed, as no longer with them; there are no elegies sung, no regrets expressed. 'He is with them alway': and not only their own moral renewal, but the swift progress of the gospel, is to be traced to their belief in the fact of the Resurrection.

Touch the rock-door of my heart,
  Christ, dead for my sin!
Say, 'Come—let us rise, and depart
  From the shadows within—

Out where the light of the stars
  Shines clear overhead,
Where the soul is free from its bars,
  And Sin lies dead.'

And dead the old Shadow lies,
  That has chilled my breast;
Say to the sleepers, 'Arise!'
  Lead them to rest!

3. The resurrection of Jesus answers our doubts regarding the future. To St. Peter, the Apostle of Hope, the Resurrection was the promise of a glorious future, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled. So, again, to St. Paul, Christ was in him 'the hope of glory.' Their Master was out of the reach of death. He had subjected Himself to human life. 'In the midst of life we are in death.' The shadow is always haunting us. So with Christ, the discipline of His humiliation was always deepening into the darkness of the end. His 'hour' was that in which His life was to be laid down. But the desertion, the loneliness, the agony were the preludes to a glorious victory—the victory over death. And His victory, since He summed up the whole of humanity in His own person, becomes our perpetual heritage, if we fully realize our oneness with Him. The immortal energies of Jesus are imparted to lives that are surrendered to Him. The victory of the grave is no more. The sting of death is drawn. To die is still an experience we have to face and endure: but in Christ we live again. There is 'a bright shoot of everlastingness' in every creature: but for those who are quickened together with Him this root will germinate through death into the unfading flowers of eternal life.

¶ The traveller to Italy enters the Mont Cenis tunnel with foreboding: the world is shut out; all is stifling gloom; and he feels a horror of helplessness. But all the time he is moving inward, and he emerges into the pure Italian air, into dazzling sunshine, with the snowy peaks on either side, uplifted into the stainless blue. So we shall arrive! The darkness of death passes, and we enter into 'a better country, that is, an heavenly.'

Hope by the Resurrection.

1 Pet. i. 3.—'Who according to his great mercy begat (AV 'hath begotten') us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.'

When St. Peter at last knew that the Lord had indeed risen from the dead, the tidings had a meaning for him through which we may begin to understand the text. Everything that could possibly fall upon the Redeemer of Israel had fallen upon Him. Pharisees and Sadducees, priests and people, Jews and Romans, death and the devil had all done their worst upon Him. He had yielded to them all, and then risen above them all. Death, which seemed always at last to swallow up even the best and mightiest of earthly things, had been shown to have no real power over Him. What end could there be to the reign of Him whom the Father had made to conquer death, that conqueror of kings and armies and peoples and every earthly might? Henceforward St. Peter could wait in patient faith Christ's own time for bringing to perfection the redemption of Israel. It might

come to pass soon or late, in his own lifetime or when his weary body should have been laid in the grave. What did that matter? It must come to pass at last, for Jesus of Nazareth, his Lord and his God, was King for ever and ever.

Will not these recollections of St. Peter's past life help to explain how the thought of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was able to draw forth from him such a burst of praise? Surely they make his words as fitting as any we can imagine. Surely the life that began for him, when he found that Christ was indeed risen from the dead, was like more than a second life, and that Easter morning was the morning of a new birth. For, though he still trod the streets of Jerusalem as before, and met there the same faces, and fished in the same lake of Gennesaret at his old home in Galilee, everything must have presented to him an entirely new look now that the spell of death was taken off, and He whom he knew so well had all power given unto Him in heaven and on earth. We are not left to fancy in trying to picture to ourselves the change which passed upon St. Peter. We have only to read the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, and there we shall see plainly in his speeches, and still more in his doings, what a new man it was that had taken the place of the old Simon Peter, and how God had indeed begotten him again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1. By opening out the vista of an endless future, the Resurrection has wholly changed the proportions of things. The capacity of looking forward is the measure of progress in the individual and in the race. Providence is God's attribute. In proportion as a man appropriates this attribute of God, in proportion as his faculty of foresight is educated, in the same degree is he raised in the moral scale. The civilized man is distinguished from the barbarian by the development of this faculty. The barbarian lives only for the day; if he has food and shelter for the moment, he thinks of nothing more. The civilized man forecasts the needs of the future; lays up stores for the future; makes plans for the future. The Christian, again, is an advance upon the civilized man, as the civilized man was an advance upon the barbarian. His vista of knowledge and interest is not terminated abruptly by the barrier of the grave. The Resurrection has stimulated the faculty and educated the habit of foresight indefinitely, by opening out to it an endless field of vision, over which its sympathies range.

2. By showing that the Christ who was dead is alive it declares that death leads to life. Death had been hitherto the chief foe of humanity—the one paramount, intolerable, ultimate evil, with which man must wrestle, though only with the absolute certainty of defeat. But now death himself was conquered. He was not only conquered, but he was turned into an ally. There was a beneficence, a joy, a glory, in death itself, when death meant entrance into an endless life. Moreover, the principle which applied to death applied *a fortiori* to all the other evils of life. Through darkness to light, through sorrow to joy, through suffering to bliss, through evil to good—this is the law of our Heavenly Father's government, whereby He would educate His family—His sons and His daughters—into the likeness of His own perfections. Accordingly we find this same principle extending throughout the gospel teaching. Everywhere it speaks of renewal, of redemption, of restitution—yes, of resurrection.

¶ Though a mere vague belief in God may and often does enable a man to face his own death bravely, and to stand unmoved amid scenes of carnage and bloodshed, it will not help him much by the graveside of those whom he really loves. I remember well in the ward of a London hospital talking to a soldier who was dirty and travel-stained, his clothes still caked with the mud of Flanders. He had been called by telegram to the bedside of his little boy who lay dying. 'Only yesterday,' he told me there in the peace of London, 'only yesterday my mate was blown to pieces alongside of me; nearly every day I have seen men killed and I didn't mind, I got sort of used to it, though sometimes I've seen 'em fall by

dozens from machine-gun fire—and all good pals of mine too, but when I got this telegram about my little Harry it fair broke me.' He looked, what he said he was, a broken man, and when, a few hours afterwards, the child died, what could I say to him? What use to speak to him of theories of survival, of hopes and dreams? The death of his child was a fact—cold and grim. Theories are but flimsy things with which to face hard facts. In face of such a fact—a man's faith, his belief in God will not stand firm unless it be supported by that other and stronger fact, the actual, literal resurrection of the Man Christ Jesus. Academic theologians live often in a world of theory; to them no doubt their theories seem real things, and so they will not realize that men who are unaccustomed to speculation and to theories but who are constantly up against the hard facts of daily life, can only be helped by facts. And it is fact—which the simple straightforward Gospel of the Resurrection offers to the bereaved and to the broken-hearted. It is that fact which more than anything else will help such men to maintain and keep alive their belief in God.[1]

A Living Hope.

1 Pet. i. 3.—'A lively (RV 'living') hope.

1. The human mind must, to a certain extent, live in and for the future. The brute is content with the present: he feeds, fights, gambols, sleeps, and makes the most of each successive sensation, because his attention is not diverted from it by forecasts about a coming time: he apprehends nothing, until the experience of his senses, appealing to a faculty of association, forces the apprehended danger right in upon him. He has no view or theory of his life, of his place in creation, of his relation to other living creatures around him, of his capacity for and title to a coming destiny of any sort. And herein the brute differs from man; because man is so little content with and occupied or exhausted by the thoughts, sensations and interests of the present moment that he cannot but look forward whether to a nearer or to a more remote future. His capacity for excellence is exactly proportioned to his power of throwing himself onward into a future which is as yet beyond his reach, and which may even be always beyond it.

(1) What is the true object of education? Is it merely to teach a boy so much writing and arithmetic, so much history and geography, so much natural science and humane literature, so much of political or of mathematical truth? No, it is much more than this. The great object of a wise educator is to set before the boy whom he is teaching some future to which he may aspire, and which may fire his best enthusiasms; some future which may supply him with a strong motive for making the most of his present opportunities; some future upon which, during the drudgery and toil of his earlier tasks, his eye may rest, as upon the prize which will reward him, the object of his hope. And does not the same rule hold in later life? The boy becomes a man, the father of a family, and he transfers to his children some of the hope which he cherished for himself. He thinks less of what they are than of what it is probable that they will be a few years hence. He thinks over their characters, their tastes, their dispositions, the evidence they have given of fitness for a particular work in life; and he enters upon a calculation of probabilities; he tries to picture to himself their various positions and occupations in after years. So strong and penetrating is his sympathy that in them he lives his own boyhood over again, only with the larger experience and wider horizon of his manhood. He may, God only knows, be destined to a terrible disappointment. But he lives in hope; and this hope enables him to work hard for his children, and to deny himself lawful enjoyments for them, and to put up cheerfully with ingratitude or dullness or perversity on the part of these objects of his strongest affections, in a manner which would have been impossible had his hopes not been strongly engaged.

(2) Nor is hope less essential to associations of men than to man in his individual capacity. An institution, a society, a nation

[1] G. Gordon, in *Papers from Picardy*, 202ff.

which has no future before it is already doomed. It may still exist, but its life is a thing of the past. An army is never thoroughly demoralized until the hope of victory is gone. A nation is not ruined until it has reached a point at which it remarks that it can make out for itself no prospect of expansion, development, progress, in coming years; a point at which it turns regretfully back upon itself, confessing to itself that it has exhausted its destiny, and has only to await the onset from without or the collapse from within which will seal the doom of which it has already felt the terrible presentiment.

2. And as hope is thus necessary to the temporary well-being of societies of men, and of individual men, so is it essential to the highest well-being of man as man. The hope upon which states, institutions, artists, painters, military men, politicians rest is directed to objects within the sphere of sense and time. But man, as man, must look beyond sense and time. For man is confronted everywhere with the barrier which arrests or dissolves all earthly hopes; he sees death ever before him. Does all end with death? That is the question of questions—the greatest question that confronts man when he sets himself to think seriously about his place in the universe, about his real being, about his destiny. It is impossible altogether to put off consideration of a point like this; it rises to life whenever there is a resurrection of serious thought. It is as fresh, as interesting, as full of unspeakable importance for this generation as it was for the last: it will be as much so for the next generation as for this. Science does not solve it; a materialized civilization cannot bury it out of sight; time does not tell upon it: there it is—this awful question awaiting us each and all—Whither am I going?

The man who has no clear belief in a future life may undoubtedly have, within some very restricted limits, a strong sense of duty. He may even persuade himself that this sense of duty is all the better and purer for not being bribed by the prospect of a future reward, or stimulated, as he would say, unhealthily, by the dread of future punishment. But for all that, his moral life is fatally impoverished. It is not merely that he has fewer and feebler motives to right action; it is that he has a false estimate of his real place in the universe. He has forfeited, in the legitimate sense of the term, his true title to self-respect. He has divested himself of the bearing, the instincts, the sense of noble birth and high destiny which properly belong to him. He is like an heir to a throne who is bent on forgetting his lineage and his responsibilities in self-sought degradation. Man cannot, if he would, live with impunity only as a more accomplished kind of animal than the creatures around him. He is a child of eternity, and he cannot unmake himself. He cannot take up a position that abdicates or ignores his highest prerogatives without sooner or later sinking into degradations which are in themselves punishment.

Surely, then, we ask ourselves few questions so important as 'Have I this hope?' If not, what is the real value of any other hopes I may have? They do not reach beyond the frontiers of time. They must fail, when the end draws near; they must be buried, utterly and for ever, in my grave. 'He shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth: neither shall his pomp follow him.' A hope worth having is, as the Apostle says, 'an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast, that entereth within the veil.' Its object is throned beyond the narrow frontiers of this life; beyond the kingdom of change and death.

Men.—We are sojourners here, as all our
fathers were,
As all our children shall be, forgetting
and forgot.
The fame of man is a murmur that
passeth on the air,—
We perish indeed if Thou remember
not.

We are sojourners here, as all our
fathers were,
Strangers travelling down to the land
of death:
There is neither work nor device nor
knowledge there,—

O grant us might for our labour, and
to rest in faith.

Boys.—In joy, in the joy of the light to be.
Men.—O Father of Lights, unvarying and
true,
Boys.—Let us build the Palace of Life anew.
Men.—Let us build for the years we shall not
see,
Boys.—Lofty of line and glorious of hue,
With gold and pearl and with the
cedar tree.
Men.—With silence due
And with service free,
Boys.—Let us build it for ever in splendour
new.
Men.—Let us build in hope and in sorrow, and
rest in Thee.[1]

3. Have we this hope? What are the tests of it?

(1) The first is that *earthly things sit easily upon us.* We are not uninterested in them: far from it. We know how much depends on our way of dealing with them. But also we are not enslaved by them. To have caught a real glimpse of the eternal is to have lost an over-relish for the things of time. To have the imperishable clearly in view is to perceive the insignificance of that which passes. A living hope of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled enables a Christian to understand life in its real proportions: what things were once gain to him, those he accounts loss for Christ.

¶ Material possessions are like bandages that blind the eyes and imprison the wings, preventing one from that appetence which leads to possessions alone essential in human life.[2]

(2) A second test of our having hope is *a willingness to make sacrifices for it.* We do not really cherish it until we have asked ourselves the question, 'What difference do my hopes of another world make in my daily life? What am I doing, what do I leave undone, that I should not leave undone or do, if I believed that all really ended at death? What changes would be made in my habits, occupations, daily modes of thought and feeling, if —to put a horrible supposition—I could awake to-morrow morning and find that Christ's conquest of the eternal world for me was a fable? The sincerity of our hopes may be exactly measured by the sacrifices which we have made, or which God knows us to be prepared to make, on behalf of them. He who ventures little hopes for little. He who has a heaven in view where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal, lays up treasures in it, and, that he may do so, surrenders all that need be surrendered here. He cuts off the right hand, he plucks out the right eye, which offend him, that, albeit maimed and with one eye, he may yet enter heaven.

¶ Nature compels us to renounce. We have yet to ask, why that stern compulsion? We have a right to ask that, for nature seems full of purpose. She does nothing indifferently. All her vast processes, so far as we can discern them, are means to ends. From the spiral wheel of a nebula to the civilization of the twentieth century she has been working towards life; towards more life and fuller. From the inorganic to the organic; from vegetable to animal; from animal to man; the movement is upwards. And in man the movement is still upwards; it is from the animal to the spiritual. Man, in this world, is the one organ of that, and the organ which she is now incessantly engaged upon, with the design of developing and perfecting it. Her problem is, in a world of matter, to create a world of spirit. And man, compounded of the two, with a body which relates him to the one, and a soul that relates him to the other, is her instrument for solving it. And here comes in Goethe's mighty word, 'Renunciation, once for all, in view of the eternal.' Yes, it is renunciation that becomes now nature's working tool. It is for this that she compels us upon her discipline; for this it is that she has stamped upon every earthly sensation, every pleasure, every experience, the mark of the transitory. By her relentless time movement she teaches us eternity. What a mark she has put on all fleshly delights! It is the

[1] H. Newbolt.
[2] Giovanni Papini, *The Story of Christ*, 209.

mark of disesteem. How true here is that saying of Fichte: 'We may love, seek, and desire the pleasures of sensuality, and may feel delight in experiencing them, but we can never hold them in esteem; esteem does not apply to them at all.' And as her kingdom of the spirit grows—and it does grow—the soul becomes ever stronger and clearer in its renunciations. We now cease to grumble at nature's discipline. We take sides with her, discerning her high purpose. We make war upon the flesh. We clear out, one after another, the clogging, inferior elements to make room in us for higher things.[1]

(3) The third test is *progressive efforts to prepare for the future life.* 'Every man that hath this hope in him,' says St. John, 'purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure.' Heaven too, the home to which hope looks forward, has its atmosphere, its manners, its interests, its language; and they must be learnt, at least to a certain extent, by its future inhabitants, on earth. Worship is of such vast importance in the Christian life, because it is a continuous preparation for the future state revealed to hope: because it forms in us those habits, interests, enthusiasms, desires, which will then be not occasional but continuous.

Some day or other I shall surely come
  Where true hearts wait for me;
Then let me learn the language of that home
  While here on earth I be,
Lest my poor lips for want of words be dumb
  In that High Company.[2]

(4) The last test is *inward peace,* and its accompaniment, *habitual outward cheerfulness.* A Christian may have his full share of anxieties, but at bottom he is always light-hearted. His soul has found its anchorage in Christ crucified, risen, ascended, glorified, interceding. He wants no more. The events of life may tell hardly upon him: but they do not touch his real self, any more than the storm on the surface of the ocean can agitate the depths below. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.'

That blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal flame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.[1]

[1] J. Brierley. *Faith's Certainties,* 138.
[2] Louise C. Moulton.

An Inheritance.

1 Pet. i. 4.—'An inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.'

THERE is something waiting for us here of which we may say, as of the living hope, that the very sound of it is refreshing: 'an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' The refreshing element belongs to the contrast between this and the things to which we are most accustomed. With our regeneration we become heirs to a glorious spiritual estate, with all its inexhaustible possessions and treasures. How the Apostles roll out the New Testament music by ringing the changes upon this eagerly welcomed word! 'Heirs of salvation!' 'Heirs of the kingdom!' 'Heirs together of the grace of life!' 'Heirs according to the hope of eternal life!' The Apostles survey their estate from different angles, that they may comprehend the wealth of the vast inheritance. With what fruitful words does the Apostle Peter characterize the nature of the inheritance. It is an inheritance 'incorruptible.' It is beyond the reach of death. No grave is ever dug on this estate. It is an inheritance 'undefiled.' It is beyond the taint of sin. No contamination ever stains its driven snow. It is an inheritance 'that fadeth not away.' It is beyond the blight of change.

[1] Wordsworth.

The leaf never turns. 'Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom.' Into this glorious inheritance are we begotten again by the abundant mercy of God.

The typical inheritance in the Old Testament is that of the Promised Land by Israel, awaited through several generations from the first promise to Abraham through all the vicissitudes of bondage and wandering. For this idea of inheritance as the fulfilment of promise see Rom. iv. 13f.; Gal. iii. 18; Heb. vi. 12, 17; xi. 8, 9. St. Peter's language here, then, calls attention to the new life not only as full of ardent hope for the future, but as at the same time the fulfilment of ancient longings of men and ancient promises of God. This double character runs through the whole paragraph; it looks backward to the searchings of the prophets, and forward to the full unveiling of the Son of God.

1. Is the inheritance present or future? There is no doubt that when we read our familiar version, whether Authorised or Revised, we think instinctively of heaven and the future. 'Reserved in heaven for you,' 'a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,'—what could be plainer? Yet it may be worth while to remember that more than once in the New Testament there occur phrases which we apply to heaven by traditional usage, but which on closer examination prove to have a very different bearing. A case in point is St. Paul's Old Testament quotation, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' We often hear these words in prayer, and even in preaching, applied to the heavenly life: yet St. Paul's obvious reference is not to anything postponed or remote but to the mystery of the Christian dispensation, so long hidden in God's hand, now at last revealed by the Holy Spirit and actually being experienced by the people of God.

(1) *It is present.*—As a matter of right all Nature is ours directly we are born into God's family, just as a vast tract of country, filled with woods and rivers and ore, belongs at the moment of birth to the heir of an estate. But, as a matter of fact, we shall never occupy all, even when eternity is passing over us; the finite can never fully grasp the infinite. Yet, from the first moment of conversion, we may begin to enter on our inheritance. We commence by studying the inspired chart which maps out that inheritance, and tells us what God is, and what He is prepared to be to us. Next we proceed to appropriate and make use of His attributes and properties for daily need. Then we become possessed of the indwelling Spirit of God, who brings His very nature into ours. And so we come to possess God in proportion as He possesses us.

(2) *It is future.*—In our experience of grace 'the best is yet to be.' Infinities of grace, indeed, cluster round a few world-moving symbols, round the cross standing stark and terrible on its skull-like hill, round the rent sepulchre in the garden; round the door in heaven open for the ascending Lord and the descending Spirit. Yet grace as hitherto revealed to us has been framed mainly in humiliation and suffering; we shall realize its height and depth and splendour only when we see it framed in glory, operating where sin does not oppose and impede, far-flashing, omnipotent, unhindered. The gifts of grace to the saint in this life are not slight—a little fragment of God's eternal calm in the heart, 'the peace that passeth understanding'; the great gain of 'enough with contentment,' and the blessing of God upon it. Nevertheless, in this life grace is circumscribed and hampered by the carnal-mindedness of the recipient, and by that same opposing world that crucified the Son; we receive only an 'earnest.'

Lord, grant us grace to rest upon Thy word,
To rest in hope until we see Thy Face;
To rest thro' toil unruffled and unstirred,
Lord, grant us grace.

This burden and this heat wear on apace:
Night comes, when sweeter than night's singing bird
Will swell the silence of our ended race.

Ah, songs which flesh and blood have never heard
And cannot hear, songs of the silent place

Where rest remains! Lord, slake our hope deferred,
Lord, grant us grace.[1]

2. The name 'inheritance' applied to the future state corrects, when its significance is fully understood, the ideas that are usually entertained regarding it. It is commonly supposed that the eternal world will be a complete contrast to this; that we can describe it only by negativing all that makes up our experience here. Death will usher us into a world altogether unknown; the glory that shall be revealed will burst upon us with a strange and startling suddenness, for which nothing in our previous history had prepared us. In our recoil from the polluted and painful scenes of earth, we have gone to the opposite extreme, and pictured ideal scenes as remote from them as possible. We describe heaven as a vision of glory, transcending all forms of happiness which the imagination had hitherto conceived, and leaving all past experience utterly behind it.

But Scripture is truer to human nature than this—truer to the whole analogy of Nature, to that law of the universe which forbids leaps, chasms, distinct lines of demarcation anywhere. It shows us that there will be no such abrupt transition between the present and the future state—that the best and clearest boundary line which we can draw between them for practical purposes is as arbitrary and imaginary as the equator on the face of our maps. The very idea of an inheritance implies previous acquaintance and familiarity. An heir grows up calmly and gradually from infancy in the midst of what is to be his own property when he reaches his majority. With the scenes of his future estate are connected all the tender associations of his childhood and youth. He passes insensibly from the condition of an heir to that of a proprietor. Now so it will be with us in regard to the future state. The objects and experiences of earth are preparations for those which await us above. We shall find the new heaven and the new earth to be the things which now appear, with the curse of sin removed from them, purified and beautified in the light of everlasting righteousness.

All that is pure and lovely on earth is the reflected image in the unstable element of time of the enduring realities of eternity—the calyx that contains within it the unopened blossom of eternity. And just as the calyx in plants is a transformed leaf, and the blossom a transformed calyx, so heaven is only earth transformed by Him who maketh all things new. The microscope shows what wonderful beauty an increased power of vision would impart to the common objects of Nature; and we know how a mind quickened by thought, and a heart expanded and made sensitive by love, can invest the homeliest landscape with a radiant significance unknown before. These experiences enable us to form some idea of the glory with which the earth shall be clothed when seen through the medium of hearts filled with immortal love, and by eyes purged with heavenly light.

(1) It is a life in which the longings of the heart are satisfied, and cherished hopes are translated into tasted experiences. In heaven personal perfection is attained. They hunger no more, neither thirst any more. There is perfect satisfaction in the attainment of perfect conformity to the will of God. No distance there between what we longed to be and what we are; but the rest of perfect attainment.

(2) And not only is there this satisfaction, but there is the satisfaction of the universal craving for perfect social communion. Here upon earth the converse even of Christian with Christian is such a marred, such an interrupted, thing. It cannot be satisfying, because it is the converse of the imperfect with the imperfect; and peace can be sustained among us here only by the generosity of great mutual forbearance. But when at length that life is attained where the perfect holds communion with the perfect, what tongue can tell, what mind can grasp what the blessedness of that eternal converse shall be?

(3) And yet all this passes away before something greater. At length there is the perfect satisfaction of our craving for God. With unveiled face we see His face; with the ear

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

that is opened to grasp His utterances and understand we hear the music of His voice. There we know at length what it is to enter into fullness of union with Him, to find eternal rest and joy, reposing on the heart of God.

¶ What Bernard of Cluny saw, as he peered through the darkness, was heaven itself. He saw it in glorious colours, all golden, all joyous, with Christ and the holy angels, and filled with holy men and women.

But what Bernard of Clairvaux saw was better still. It was the King of the fair, heavenly land. It was the dear Saviour who died for us. What he saw was the Person of Jesus. He saw the head that was crowned with thorns, and the feet that were pierced with nails, and His hands and His side.

And each of them put what he saw into a hymn.

The poor monk who had only a cell to live in made the hymn we have so often sung:

Jerusalem the Golden!
With milk and honey blest:
Beneath Thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed.

I know not, oh, I know not
What joys await us there,
What radiancy of glory,
What light beyond compare.

The rich Abbot of Clairvaux saw past that glory, and fixed his great heart on Jesus Himself:

Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Thy blest name,
O Saviour of mankind.[1]

[1] A. Macleod.

The Characteristics of the Inheritance.

1 Pet. i. 4.—'An inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.'

Few parts of the earth's surface are more dreary and desolate than the islands along the coast in the extreme north of Norway. They are entirely destitute of trees and shrubs, and so far beyond the limits of cultivation that only the most meagre trace of polar vegetation faintly tinges with verdure the barren rocks during the summer months. The Arctic willow which creeps along the soil, and whose root, stem, and foliage, could be gummed on a sheet of note-paper, is the only representative of the woods and forests of more favoured regions. The pulse of Nature is there at the lowest—it beats and that is all; and the struggle for existence, elsewhere carried on with crowds of rival plants and animals, is there, as on the bare summits of lofty mountains, maintained solely against the fierce elements. And yet, by a wonderful compensation, the Gulf Stream, which crosses the Atlantic from the tropical seas of America and skirts the northern shores of Europe, breathes its last warm breath upon these islands, thus somewhat modifying their natural temperature, and, what is far better, strews upon their shores the valuable timber carried down into the ocean by the great rivers of the West. 'Strange to think,' says Bayard Taylor, 'of Arctic fishermen, in the absence of all other fuel, burning upon their hearths the palm trees of Hayti, the mahogany of Honduras, and the precious commercial woods of the Amazon and the Orinoco!'

A compensatory arrangement equally wonderful exists in the spiritual world. In this chill and desolate island of the great ocean of eternity in which we live, where the storms of time blow with rude and frequent violence, and but little comfort grows naturally on the soil, a warm current comes to us from the heavenly paradise, and not only modifies our climate, but also casts upon our shore leaves and branches of the trees of life that grow in the midst of the Paradise of God. The promise of the text is one of these branches of the

tree of life, wafted to our bleak shores by the spiritual gulf-stream. What would our earth be were it not irradiated by the sun of another world? What would our life be were it not for the revelations and hopes of the future life? Our world is not self-contained. It possesses none of the elements essential to its welfare. It derives all its colour, force, and life from the light of the sun. And the spiritual lesson which this constant dependence of our earth upon the sun—this conjunction of two orbs for the benefit of one—teaches us is that our natural life is equally incomplete, and equally dependent upon the heavenly—that the two must be conjoined in order to form a happy life here.

The promise is of an inheritance, and the inheritance is described in three words.

1. It is *incorruptible.*—It is not liable to decay. Nature looks her best in the days of early autumn with her golden corn-sheaves, the gorgeous tints of the fading leaves, the berries of the wild rose and the rowan, the undiminished foliage of the forest trees, the ruddy wealth of the orchard. But, amid all, our enjoyment is tinged with sadness, for we know that decay lies beneath, eagerly at work, and that ere long the woodland glade will be strewn with the dying leaves falling in myriads before the gale, rotting in drenched heaps. So, too, amid our happiest converse with loved ones, a sad foreboding sometimes invades our hearts, suggesting that it will not last. But the knowledge of God, like our treasure in heaven, cannot corrupt, nor can it be stolen from us by any thieving hand. It cannot pass from us, nor we from it. It cannot share the fate of any earthly possession.

¶ 'Incorruptible'—you could not say that of every earthly inheritance: how often there is a spot of decay, a rift within the lute, a skeleton in the cupboard, a ghost at the banquet, something out of which ruin and misery may emerge before the day is done! The thought of that which by contrast is incorruptible appears and reappears in the New Testament. St. Paul tells us of a 'God incorruptible' and of a 'crown incorruptible'; St. Peter later in this letter speaks of a 'seed incorruptible'; our Lord Himself told of a treasure-store 'where moth and rust do not corrupt.[1]

2. It is *undefiled.*—Nothing reads more strangely than the Levitical regulations for purification. Elaborate provision is made not only for purifying persons, but for purging the houses, and even the very garments. 'Almost all things were by the law purged by blood.' But it all assumes a tragic impressiveness as an expression of the Hebrew conception of sin; its taint was everywhere, unescapable, all-pervading; Israel was defiled, so was her inheritance. That taint remains; it clings to heart and conscience; it percolates everywhere; it pervades everything. Is the worldly man's inheritance popularity? Be sure he did not win it by an inflexible allegiance to principle. Is it power? He did not gain it without inflicting many a wound. Is it wealth? Then our Lord Himself brands it as 'the mammon of unrighteousness.' Every coin in your cashbox since first mined out of its seam in the earth's crust has been the instrument of injustice and dishonour, of greed, of lust, of appetite. For that coin a man sold his conscience, a woman sold her honour, a Judas sold his Lord. It is defiled. But He who 'through sanctification of the Spirit' is removing the defilement from our hearts has also prepared an inheritance which the slime of the serpent shall never sully—an inheritance 'undefiled, reserved in heaven.'

¶ A beautiful poetical idea is suggested by the original Greek word here translated 'undefiled.' It is *amiantos,* the name of the strange mineral amianthus, or asbestos, which occurs in primitive rocks, and is of a greyish colour and fibrous texture. Owing to its flexibility, and power of enduring heat without alteration, it was employed in ancient times in the fabrication of a kind of cloth, which when soiled was thrown into the fire, from whence it came out free from all its stains, and perfectly white. By the Romans this cloth was purchased at an exorbitant price, for the purpose of wrapping up the dead when laid upon the funeral pile, and thus preserving their ashes. It is extremely likely that

[1] J. M. E. Ross.

the Apostle had this custom in view when he made use of such a peculiar term to describe the nature of the inheritance. Like the amianthus cloth, which preserved the relics of the dead, this inheritance, with all that is most precious and enduring wrapped up in it, will emerge pure and undefiled from the fire that shall consume all the decays and corruptions of earth.[1]

3. It *fadeth not away*.—In the third touch of description there is also a Divine contrast with most of the things we know. So many fade!—fortunes dwindle, values decrease, riches take wings. And even if a man's grasp to the very last be as full as it can hold, there comes a time when all he has will fade away from him. He may grope for it over his dying bed with fevered hands, but he will not be able to hold it. Whatever it has been,—money, lands, titles, power—his dying eyes shall see it fading, all its solid worth transmuted into the stuff that dreams are made of.

¶ St. Peter's adjective here is peculiar to himself, so far as the New Testament goes, but it was a familiar term in the athletics of the day, applied to the evergreen crowns which victorious athletes wore.[2]

¶ In one of the islands of Greece, when workmen were making excavations in very ancient subterranean tombs, they came upon a magnificent marble sarcophagus, bearing an inscription in Greek, telling that here was interred the body of Chrysohoë, the golden haired, only daughter of Sopyrus, King of Milo. When the lid was taken off, and the gleam of the torches shone within, a sight was disclosed which thrilled the spectators with wonder and awe. There the princess lay embalmed, dressed in gorgeous robes, adorned with jewels of antique shape, with her long luxuriant hair bound by a golden circlet flowing down her face and sides. After a sleep of nearly three thousand years, she was fresh and fair as if interred only yesterday. But while the spectators gazed with bated breath, the air came in, and all at once the lovely vision collapsed, crumbled away, and nothing remained in the cold marble tomb but a handful of ashes mingled with gold and jewels. As with this vision, so it is with all earthly joys and sights of beauty, however carefully they may have been embalmed by love, or however long they may have endured in their sweetness. The air of time at length crumbles them away, and nought remains but the ashes of grief and the jewels of memory.[1]

[1] H. Macmillan.
[2] J. M. E. Ross.

Amaranth.

1 Pet. i. 4.—'An inheritance . . . that fadeth not away.'

The phrase 'fadeth not away' is the translation in our version of the Greek word *Amarantos* from which the name of the amaranth is derived.

1. Out of all the vast wealth of earth's floral beauty, the classic poets selected only two flowers to adorn its dim and misty scenes; and these by no means the fairest and most graceful, possessing no representative character to entitle them to the immortality thus conferred upon them. The Sicilian legend of the Rape of Proserpine depicts the maiden as gathering, in the meadows of Enna, the snow-white lilies and the golden and crimson flowers that hid the grass with a maze of dazzling brightness like the fretwork of sunset clouds. Seized by Pluto while engaged in this innocent amusement, she was carried down to the infernal regions, with her hands still full of the mortal flowers which she had gathered. The gloomy awe-inspiring deity who pitilessly drags down all that lives into the hidden depths of the earth, thus pulled down with his fair captive a portion of the beauty and brightness of the upper world. These flowers became immortal, and year after year bloomed in the sunless and dewless air, without a blossom falling or a leaf fading. This beautiful fable is a gleam of familiar light seen in the mist. The flowers of Proserpine introduced an unknown sunshine into a shady place. They were not natives of that waste outside region; they did not grow in the barren soil.

[1] H. Macmillan.

They were only sweet reminiscences of the dear old scenes of earth—tenderly cherished amid associations altogether different.

The two flowers specially mentioned by the poets as growing in the fields of the immortals were the asphodel and the amaranth. Numerous beautiful allusions to them occur in the classic writings; but no such description is given as would enable us to identify them with any of the flowers now growing in the famous scenes of antiquity.

(1) The plant now known as the asphodel grows in great profusion everywhere in Southern Europe. It is a kind of lily—our dear old English word daffodil being but a corruption of it—distinguished by its thick tuft of long narrow leaves, out of which rises a tall rod covered with white star-like flowers whose petals are streaked with purple lines. It is a majestic flower, and gives a fine effect to the foreground of an Italian landscape. Whether this was the Homeric asphodel which blossomed early across the Styx, and which the Greeks planted in their graveyards as food for the Shades, we do not know, but it is certainly worthy of such a destiny. It has a grey spectral gleam when seen in misty weather; and even in the clear garish noon its spire of blossoms seems to have derived a silvery sheen from the cold moonbeams rather than from the warm sunshine. A bare hillside covered with its dark-green grassy tufts and ghostly flowers looks like a bit of extra-mundane scenery.

(2) The amaranth is involved in still deeper obscurity. The flower known to the classic poets, we believe, however, to be the *Gomphrena Globosa*, as its round flowers of a deep purple resembling those of the common clover, produced on long stiff stalks bare of leaves, answer better than any other species the description of Pliny. The calyx of this globe-amaranth, which constitutes the flower, is of so dry a texture that it seems dead even while it is growing; and it is to this fine thin membranous texture that the flower owes its glossy beauty, and its persistent endurance. It was a favourite decoration at funerals. Homer describes the Thessalians as wearing chaplets of amaranth; and Milton, when speaking of the multitude of angels before God casting down their crowns 'inwove with amaranth and gold,' at His feet, says:—

> Immortal amarant, a flower which once
> In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life,
> Began to bloom, but soon for man's offence,
> To Heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows,
> And flowers aloft, shading the fount of Life,
> And where the River of Bliss through midst of Heaven
> Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber stream.[1]

2. The amaranth of the ancients was a fitting type of their future state. The immortality which they conceived was as lifeless and joyless as the juiceless leaves and flowers of this representative plant, which, though they preserved their form and colour after having been plucked for an indefinite period, had none of the bloom and freshness of life about them. Their hell had indeed a singularly distinct and vivid realization in their minds; there are no pictures of the fate of the wicked more dreadful even in the Inferno of Dante than those which their poets present in Ixion and his wheel, Tantalus and his draught of water, Sisyphus and his stone, Prometheus and his vulture, and the Danaids and their leaky buckets. Their only distinct idea of a future world was confined to the incidents of punishment. All distinctness disappears as we enter the melancholy meadows of asphodel which constituted their shadowy image of Elysium. Their amaranthine bowers were dry and ghostly, having the semblance of life but none of its play and blessedness. The world of the immortals was a world of shadows inhabited by shades. Ossian never imagined more misty outlines, or peopled his heath of Lodi with forms more pale and unsubstantial. There the experiment of the alchemist was performed on a great scale. Out of the ashes of the flower that had been consumed arose a delicate apparition of stalk and leaf and blossom—the phantom plant—faithful to its former image as the lovely transcript of scenery in still water, but without the old bloom and

[1] *Paradise Lost*, i. 353.

fragrance. Well might Achilles in such an Elysium declare:—

> I had rather live
> The servile hired for hire, and eat the bread
> Of some man scantily himself sustained,
> Than sovereign empire hold o'er all the shades.

3. Not a whit more satisfactory are the Christian conceptions of the future world in the minds of many persons. They have fearfully vivid ideas of the punishment of the wicked; but regarding the reward of the righteous they believe in the most literal manner that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' It is a far-off realm, receding into dimness and vagueness by the distance to which we remove it; leaving all past experience, all hopes and forms of happiness which the imagination had hitherto conceived, and the heart had learned to love, utterly behind it. And hence it is that descriptions of heaven, however gorgeous and transcendental, usually fail to interest or impress us. The mind is lost in the vagueness. Permanence is the only definite idea we associate with it. We accept the jewelled walls and golden streets of the heavenly city—substances the most precious and indestructible that we know—as satisfactory symbols of its unchanging endurance. And the contrast between this endurance and our experience of the fleeting possessions and enjoyments of earth is so grateful that we care not if the one element of permanence be secured even at the expense of all that makes permanence desirable. We whose gourd grows up in a night and withers in a night are prone to fancy that we should be perfectly happy in fields of immortal asphodels, and under the shadow of amaranthine bowers.

But the word 'inheritance' tells us that it is no strange, unknown realm into which we shall be ushered by death, but a familiar scene. And we shall be prepared by our acquaintance with earthly things (which are the shadows and foretastes of heavenly things) to enter into and enjoy it, as the heir who has grown up on an estate enters into his inheritance when he comes of age. Our Christianity teaches us by the ascension of Christ's body and the resurrection of our own that the whole scene, with its circumstances and objects, must be accommodated to the tastes and character of man as he now is, only purified and glorified. It is not a world of shadows, but a world glowing with all the infinite beauty and variety of life. The tree of life, with its twelve kinds of fruit every month, will be its appropriate symbol, and not the dry changeless amaranth. And all who here have worn the white flower of a blameless life will find, to their glad surprise, that the waste outside wilderness which they pictured the heaven that awaited them to be, is a part of their own earthly home, made to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

> From above us and from under,
> In the ocean and the thunder,
> Thou preludest to the wonder
> Of the Paradise to be:
> For a moment we may guess Thee
> From Thy creatures that confess Thee
> When the morn and even bless Thee,
> And Thy smile is on the sea.
>
> Then from something seen or heard,
> Whether forests softly stirred,
> Or the speaking of a word,
> Or the singing of a bird,
> Cares and sorrows cease:
> For a moment on the soul
> Falls the rest that maketh whole,
> Falls the endless peace.
>
> O the hush from earth's annoys!
> O the heaven, O the joys
> Such as priest and singing-boys
> Cannot sing or say!
> There is no more pain and crying,
> There is no more death and dying,
> As for sorrow and for sighing,—
> These shall flee away.[1]

[1] F. W. H. Myers.

'Kept.'

1 Pet. i. 5.—'Kept by the power of God.'

THERE are three Greek words translated 'keep' or 'kept' in the Bible. There is, first of all, the word *phulassō*, which really means to convoy, to guard. It would be the word used for one of Her Majesty's ships appointed to convoy merchant men across the ocean—to guard, to convoy. It is the word used very frequently throughout the *Septuagint*. When Aaron assembled the people every morning for their day's march, he lifted up his hand and said, 'the Lord bless thee and keep thee.' The Lord was going before them. There, upon the right hand and the left, that pillar of cloud and fire was, as it were, the safe convoy for the people throughout their journey.

Then there is the word *tēreō*, which signifies tender, watchful care: the care, for instance, of a mother-bird for her little ones, the care of the hen that would gather her chicks under her wing. This is the word used by our Lord: 'Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me'; keep them as a watchful mother does, bending over them, guarding them from evil on every side.

But it is neither of these words which is used here. It is the third word, the word *phroureō*, which means to 'garrison.' It is the same word that the Apostle Paul uses when he is talking about the Governor under King Aretas who guarded the city of the Damascenes. It is the same word that the same Apostle employs, with the same emblematical reference as here, when he speaks of 'the peace of God' as guarding our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. That is to say, we are to think of some little undefended, unwalled village, which is made safe because a strong force is thrown into it. St. Peter thinks that every Christian man has enemies that he cannot beat back alone, and he thinks that every Christian man may have round him a ring of defence against which all enemies will break and foam themselves away like waves against a lighthouse.

1. First, the keeping is *all-inclusive*. What is kept? We are kept. How much of us? The whole being. Does God keep one part of us and not another? No. Some people have an idea that this is a sort of vague general keeping, and that God will keep them in such a way that when they die they will get to heaven. But they do not apply that word 'kept' to everything in their being and nature. And yet that is what God wants.

¶ Here I have a watch. Suppose that this watch had been borrowed from a friend, and he had said to me, 'When you go to Europe I will let you take it with you, but mind and keep it safe and bring it back.' And suppose I injured the watch, and had the hands broken, and the face defaced, and some of the wheels and springs spoiled, and took it back in that condition, and handed it to my friend, he would say, 'Ah, but I gave you that watch on condition that you would keep it.' 'Have I not kept it? There is the watch.' 'But I did not want you to keep it in that general way, so that you should bring me back only the shell of the watch, or the remains. I expected you to keep every part of it.' And so God does not keep us in this general way, so that at the last, somehow or other, we shall be saved as by fire, and just get into heaven. But the keeping power and the love of God applies to every particular of our being.[1]

(1) There are some people who think God will keep them in spiritual but not in temporal things. Now, God sends us to work in the world, but He does not say: I must now leave you to earn your own money, and to get your livelihood for yourself. He knows we are not able to keep ourselves. God says: My child, there is no work you are to do, and no business in which you are engaged, and not a penny which you are to spend, but I, your Father, will take into My keeping. God cares not only for the spiritual, but also for the temporal. The greater part of the life of many people must be spent amid the temptations and distractions of business; but God will care for them there. The keeping of God includes all.

(2) There are others who think: In time of trial God keeps us, but in time of prosperity

[1] A. Murray.

we do not need His keeping. They forget Him then and let Him go. Others, again, think the very opposite. They think: In time of prosperity, when things are smooth and quiet, we are able to cling to God, but when heavy trials come, somehow or other our will rebels, and God does not keep us then. But in prosperity as in adversity, in the sunshine as in the gloom, our God is ready to keep us all the time.

He is my stay and my defence;—
  How shall I fail or fall?
My helper is Omnipotence!
  My ruler ruleth all.

The powers below and powers above
  Are subject to His care;—
I cannot wander from His love
  Who loves me everywhere.[1]

(3) Once more, there are others who think of God's keeping thus: God will keep me from doing very great wickedness, but there are small sins I cannot expect Him to keep me from. There is the sin of temper. I cannot expect God to conquer that. When you hear of some man who has been tempted and gone astray, or fallen into drunkenness or murder, you thank God for His keeping power. 'I might have done the same as that man,' you say, 'if God had not kept me.' We believe He keeps us from drunkenness and murder. And why do we not believe that He can keep us from outbreaks of temper? We thought that this was of less importance; we did not remember that the great commandment of the New Testament is, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' And when our temper and hasty judgment and sharp words came out we sinned against the highest law—the law of God's love. And yet we say: God will not, God cannot—no, we will not say, God cannot; but we say, God does not—keep me from that. We perhaps say: He can; but there is something in me that cannot attain to it, and which God does not take away. Listen to these words, 'Kept by the power of God.' There is no qualifying clause to them. The meaning is, that, if we will entrust ourselves entirely and absolutely to the omnipotence of God, He will delight to keep us.

2. This keeping is not only an all-inclusive keeping, it is also an *almighty* keeping. God is almighty, and the Almighty God offers Himself to work in my heart, to do the work of keeping me; and I want to get linked with Omnipotence, or rather, linked to the Omnipotent One, to the living God, to have my place in the hollow of His hand. We read the Psalms, and we think of the wonderful expressions that David uses; as, for instance, when he speaks about God being our God, our Fortress, our Refuge, our Strong Tower, our Strength, and our Salvation. David had very wonderful views of how the everlasting God is Himself the hiding-place of the believing soul, and of how He takes the believer and keeps him in the very hollow of His hand, in the secret of His pavilion, under the shadow of His wings, under His very feathers. And we who are the children of Pentecost, we who have known Christ and His blood and the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, why is it we know so little of what it is to walk confidently step by step with the Almighty God as our Keeper?

¶ 'He is able to keep you from falling.' Put into the word 'you' all the weakness, all the unworthiness, all the sinfulness which belongs to man in the fall; yet He is able to keep *you*. He does not underrate the disadvantage of its being *you* when He bids His messengers say, 'He is able to keep you from falling.' It would be impossible, utterly impossible; only it is undertaken by the Infinite Love. Look out and up, then. Look up 'from the depth,' the vast depth of your weakness, perhaps of your mysteriously inherited weakness. Look up out of your failure under some temptation, inward or outward, inherited, so to speak from yourself, from your own unfaithfulness in the past. Look up out of your ruined purposes—unto Himself. He is able to rebuild, and more than rebuild, the ruins. He is able to untie the knot, and draw out straight the line of will and obedience to Himself. Being what He is, Keeper of Israel, God of the Promise, Lord of the Sacrifice, Prince

[1] Caroline A. Mason.

of Life, present Saviour, indwelling Power, He is able to keep *you* that *your* feet shall not totter. They shall stand 'in a large room'; they shall hold on straight, until at last they enter, step by step—it is one step at a time even then—'through the gates into the City.' [1]

3. This keeping is not only all-inclusive and omnipotent, but also *continuous* and unbroken. People sometimes say, 'For a week or a month God has kept me very wonderfully; I have lived in the light of His countenance, and I cannot say what joy I have not had in fellowship with Him. At times I felt as if I were carried heavenward on eagle's wings. But it did not continue. It was too good; it could not last.' And some say, 'It was necessary that I should fall to keep me humble.' And others say, 'I know it was my own fault; but somehow one cannot always live on the heights.' Can there be any reason why the keeping of God should not be continuous and unbroken? All life is an unbroken continuity. If my life were stopped for half an hour I should be dead, and my life gone. Life is a continuous thing, the life of God is His almighty power working in us. God comes to us as the Almighty One, and without any condition He offers to be our Keeper, and His keeping means that day by day, moment by moment, God is going to keep us.

¶ In South Africa they sometimes make a graft, and above it they tie a bottle of water, so that now and then there shall be a drop to saturate what they have put about it. And so the moisture is kept there unceasingly until the graft has had time to strike, and resist the heat of the sun. Will our God, in His tender-hearted love towards us, not keep us every moment when He has promised to do so? [2]

[1] H. C. G. Moule, *All in Christ*, 22.
[2] A. Murray.

Salvation in Full.

1 Pet. i. 5.—'A salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.'

Our inheritance is not ours in full possession yet, it is reserved for us in heaven. And lest we should come to harm before we reach it, we are guarded by the power of God through faith, and so kept safely for the salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this it is that we Christian people are to rejoice. The present salvation is an incomplete salvation; the perfect salvation is to come.

1. The future life of those who are to live for ever in God—the complete salvation—transcends all thought as well as all hope; we cannot see the inheritance for the golden haze that surrounds it; it is too intensely bright for mortal vision; it belongs to another order than this; it cannot be revealed to knowledge until it is revealed in experience. But some elements of the present salvation will in the future salvation be perfect. Our sins, through the infinite mercy of God, through Him who is the Propitiation for our sins, are already forgiven, and we may have the full assurance that they are forgiven. To those who have had any deep sense of the evil of sin—who have felt in their very heart that it is an awful thing, a thing of horror, damnable—forgiveness is very wonderful; and the consciousness that there is peace between us and the Eternal brings with it a certain awe as well as a great blessedness. But not until we are capable of a clearer and fuller knowledge of God, not until our life at every point, instead of at a single point, touches the infinite life of God—not till then shall we know the infinite blessedness of the discovery that as far as the East is from the West, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us, that He has blotted out our sins as a thick cloud vanishes and leaves no stain on the blue of heaven. That blessedness is to come.

When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon glaring sun,
When we stand with Christ in glory,

Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.

When I stand before the throne
Dressed in beauty not my own,
When I see Thee as Thou art,
Love Thee with unsinning heart,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.

When the praise of heaven I hear,
Loud as thunders to the ear,
Loud as many waters' noise,
Sweet as harp's melodious voice,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe.

Even on earth, as through a glass,
Darkly, let Thy glory pass;
Make forgiveness feel so sweet;
Make Thy Spirit's help so meet;
Even on earth, Lord, make me know
Something of how much I owe.[1]

2. Here—in the power of life which has its roots in Christ and receives its inspiration from the Holy Spirit—we may achieve righteousness and saintliness. It would be too large a claim—it would be a claim impossible to concede—if it were contended that here any man ever has an infallible perception of what is sinful and a complete knowledge of duty. The trouble is, for many of us at least, that we do not discover the sinfulness till we have sinned; we do not recognize the duty till the time has passed for discharging it. But the day of liberation will come, when, in the clear light of God, we shall know perfectly the perfect life, and shall never, through a false judgment, mistake the will of the Eternal; when every spontaneous impulse will be the ally of conscience; when the strong currents of emotion and passion will flow in one channel and carry us swiftly to new and nobler ideals of righteousness; when every devout purpose will be equalled or transcended by achievement; when our better self will be disengaged from the flesh, and will receive—or, in the power of God, create for itself—an organism through which, without painful effort, it will be able to accomplish all His will; when all the external conditions of life will be sacraments and channels of grace; and when in the unbroken fellowship with saints and with God we shall be animated and enabled to rise through age after age to loftier heights of perfection and of joy. And so in every element of the present salvation we may discover the promise of a larger salvation to come.

¶ If you saw a great wall in some palace, with slabs of polished marble for most of its length, and here and there stretches of coarse rubble shoved in, you would know that that was not the final condition, that the rubble had to be cased over, or taken out and replaced by the lucent slab that reflected the light, and showed, by its reflecting, its own mottled beauty. Thus the very inconsistencies, the thwarted desires, the broken resolutions, the aspirations that never can clothe themselves in the flesh of reality, which belong to the Christian life, declare that this is but the first stage of the structure, and point onwards to the time when the imperfections shall be swept away, 'and for brass he will bring gold, for iron he will bring silver,' and then the windows shall be set 'in agates, and the gates in carbuncles, and all the borders in pleasant stones.' Perfect salvation is obviously the only issue of the present imperfect salvation.[1]

(1) There is something in this great hope to give us courage and to renew the strength which too often faints and the resolution which too often falters. We do unwisely to dispense with the energy which we may derive from the blessed and perfect future. The joy of the Christian life would be immeasurably augmented if we dwelt more constantly on its eternal consummation in the Divine Presence, and the joy would give strength. We have great memories to sustain us—and, above all, the memory of the supreme manifestation of the Divine love in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But when Hope is confederate with Memory, and both are confirmed by the present consciousness that we have found God, every power of our better

[1] R. Murray M'Cheyne.

[1] A. Maclaren.

life receives new animation, and we see that all things are possible to us.

(2) Further—apart from a clear vision of the perfect salvation—faith is subject to an unnecessary strain. Forget to how large and free and blessed a life men are destined in Christ in the next world, and it will sometimes seem as if there were a disproportion between the great discoveries of the Christian gospel and what the gospel has actually accomplished. The incarnation and the death of Christ; the descent of the Eternal Son of God from inaccessible heights of glory to the limitations of human life, to pain, to unknown depths of darkness; the sorrows through which He passed when He became the Sacrifice for the sin of the world—surely something more should come of all these than the imperfect righteousness which is achieved in this world by those whom He saves, the peace so often broken, the joy so often clouded, the vision of God, which at its strongest and clearest is so dim. Does that which we see and know and experience already exhaust the power of that august Divine humiliation and the purposes of that infinite Divine love? The results—if we see them all—were they worth the cost?

¶ It is as if you were to judge of the worth of labour which has been spent upon the fields by their appearance in early spring, when the dark ground is hardly relieved by the faint green of the wheat which has just begun to shoot—it is so frail, apparently of so little value. Is this all that is to come of cleaning the ground and ploughing it and enriching it for the seed? You must wait—wait till the spring has expanded into the bright days of summer, and the summer into early autumn; and then the corn ripened, perfected, rising and falling in golden billows under the glowing sun, will reveal the end for which the farmer laboured. And Christ's harvest time is not here, but in worlds unseen. Not until we know the perfect righteousness and the perfect blessedness of the saints in glory shall we see for what great ends the Son of God became man, and suffered, and died, and rose again.[1]

[1] R. W. Dale.

Trials and Temptations.

1 Pet. i. 6, 7.—'Wherein ye greatly rejoic though now for a season (RV 'a little while' if need be, ye are in heaviness (RV 'ye have bee put to grief') through (RV 'in') manifold tempta tions, that the trial (RV 'proof') of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perish eth, though it be tried (RV 'is proved') by fir might be found unto praise and honour and glor at the appearing (RV 'revelation') of Jesu Christ.'

The text contains two words, 'trials' an 'temptations,' which, so far as their etymolog is concerned, ought to mean nearly the sam thing, but which, as generally used, conve very different ideas, and indeed are used with out much thought about their etymology When people talk of having had trials, the mean that they have had to suffer affliction o distress, and the use of the phrase generally in dicates that they think of them as sent by th hand of God for some mysterious reason tha they do not presume to fathom. Temptations on the other hand, are looked on as altogethe evil things coming from the devil, or at leas from the world or the flesh, and not from God and they seem to have for thinking so th authority of St. James, who says: 'Let n man say when he is tempted, I am tempted o God: for God cannot be tempted with evil neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.'

Etymologically the word 'temptation means no more than 'trial,' and was so used in the days of the making of our Authorised Version. But the Greek word which is com monly translated 'tempt' or 'temptation' very often cannot be so rendered without conveying quite a wrong idea to an English reader. In the text, when St. Peter says to his disciples that they were in heaviness through manifold temptations, perhaps 'trials' would have more nearly conveyed the idea to us, for what St Peter had in view was the persecution which they had to endure. No doubt, persecution did bring with it a certain temptation namely, that of escaping it by apostasy. But the Apostle's meaning comes out more clearly in a following passage (iv. 12), where the same

word, commonly translated 'tempt,' occurs: 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.' Here the Revised Version renders 'which is to prove you.'

There is a word common enough in books of theology, though not quite so common in ordinary language, which expresses the idea, namely, the word 'probation,' we are here in a state of probation, our characters being continually tried and proved—it may be by what we ordinarily call temptations, when inducements are held out to us to do wrong, and our conduct reveals whether or not we have firmness to resist them; it may be by what we ordinarily call trials, when what is proved is not so much whether we have firmness to resist as whether we have strength to bear. Nay, it may be by wealth and prosperity, which no less than adversity bring trial. So felt one of old, who prayed that he might not be exposed to trial of either kind. He asked: 'Give me neither poverty nor riches; . . . lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.'

1. Now if our discipline here included nothing but what we popularly call trials, we should not feel that we had any reason to doubt the goodness of God, or to hesitate to believe the saying that He does not afflict willingly. We all recognize that valuable lessons may be learned in the school of adversity. There is felt to be something incomplete in the character of one with whom everything has gone smoothly, and who has never known sorrow or anxiety. The jovial high-spirited man may be a pleasant companion in our lighter hours, but is it to him we turn for advice in our anxiety, or for sympathy in our affliction? Anyone who has passed through the discipline of affliction must know that he has been there taught lessons that it was good for him to learn. Now, surely no child would have a right to think his father was not good to him because he set him lessons to learn which he found repulsive or difficult, or which he could not, at the time, see the use of.

¶ No man gets good for himself alone out of his sorrows. Whatever purifies and makes gentler and more Christ-like, whatever teaches or builds up—and sorrows rightly borne do all these—is for the common good. Be our trials great or small, be they minute and every-day—like gnats that hum about us in clouds, and may be swept away by the hand, and irritate rather than hurt when they sting—or be they huge and formidable, like the viper that clings to the wrist and poisons the life-blood, they are meant to give us good gifts, which we may transmit to the narrow circle of our homes, and in every widening ring of influence to all around us. Have we never known a household where some chronic invalid, lying helpless perhaps on a sofa, was a source of the highest blessing and the centre of holy influence, that made every member of the family gentler, more self-denying and loving? We shall never understand our sorrows unless we try to answer the question, What good to others is meant to come through me by this?[1]

2. But trials such as we ordinarily call temptations seem to stand on a different footing, for these involve real danger, to which it seems hard that we should be exposed. Yet, when the danger has been faced and encountered successfully, we feel ourselves the better of the trial. We have been tested in small matters and have been found faithful; we have thus proved our right to be entrusted with greater charges, and may with courage undertake them, in good hope that when the test comes we shall not be found wanting. What soldier thinks his commander does him an injury in choosing him for a post of danger? Nay, he feels honoured by his commander's confidence that his courage and his presence of mind will not fail, and he accepts the trust, resolved that they shall not. And such were the feelings of those who passed through that severest temptation of all, the temptation to deny Christ when called on to confess Him before the hostile tribunal. The valiant confessors of old murmured not that it should be their lot to encounter such a trial,

[1] A. Maclaren.

but gloried in the honour done them, as we are told of the Apostles who, when beaten for their confession of Christ, rejoiced that they had been counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. God, we are told, is like a refiner's fire, and those who have passed through it may echo the Psalmist's thanksgiving: 'Thou hast tried us as silver is tried. We went through fire and through water, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.'

¶ And there was never any persecution that came but we saw it was for good, and we looked upon it to be good as from God. And there was never any prisons or sufferings that I was in, but still it was for bringing multitudes more out of prison.[1]

¶ When Richard Baxter was told that he would have a glorious reward because he had suffered so much in the cause of Christ, he replied that he didn't want any reward other than a little more persecution. He was not weary, but willing to have more of it, if God willed it. He gloried in tribulation, like Paul, and panted for more of it, resolutely assured that no foe could work anything upon him other than the will of God desired and permitted.[2]

The Testing of Faith.

1 Pet. i. 6, 7.—'Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (RV 'a little while'), if need be, ye are in heaviness (RV 'ye have been put to grief') through (RV 'in') manifold temptations, that the trial (RV 'proof') of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried (RV 'is proved') by fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing (RV 'revelation') of Jesus Christ.'

Modern times are but little like the apostolic in their menace to Christian living. Martyrdom is not to be thought of in many places. But every life has its times when faith is brought to a test. So often our plans go awry and we are tempted to feel that we could have done better if we had had the management of our fate. Perhaps we might, for the moment and for the individual; or, perhaps it is better to say, if the moment and the individual were alone considered the plans would often have been different. Often the thing that happens seems cruel and disastrous, and the most facile Christian, in his ingenious devising of excuses, cannot frame a plausible reason for what is done. And, just so often, faith is put to the test.

Now these 'manifold trials' assume many guises and employ varied weapons of painful inquisition. Some of them may be found in the antagonism of men. Loyalty to truth may be confronted with persecution. A beautiful ministry may be given an evil interpretation. Our beneficence may be maligned. Our very leniency may be vituperated and proclaimed as a device of the devil. This may be one of 'the manifold trials.' Or our antagonism may be found in the apparent hostility of our circumstances. Success is denied us. Every way we take seems to bristle with difficulties. Every street we enter proves to be a cul-de-sac. We never emerge into an airy and spacious prosperity. We pass our days in material straits. Such may be another of 'the manifold trials.' Or it may be that our antagonist dwells in the realm of our own flesh. We suffer incessant pain. We are just a bundle of exquisite nerves. The streets of the city are instruments of torture. The bang of a door shakes the frail house to its base. We are the easy victims of physical depression. Who knows but that this may have been St. Paul's 'thorn in the flesh'? At any rate, it is one of 'the manifold trials' by which many of our brethren are put to grief.

Why do these trials come? Why are antagonisms allowed to range themselves across our way? Why are there any blind streets which bar our progress? Why does not labour always issue in success? Why are 'manifold trials' permitted? We may find a partial response in the words of our text. They are permitted for 'the proof' of our faith. That is the purposed ministry of the sharp antagonism and the cloudy day—'the proof of your faith.' Now 'to prove' the faith means much more than to test it.

1. First of all, it means to *reveal* it. To prove the faith is to prove it to others. God

[1] George Fox.
[2] *John Brown Paton*, 362.

wants to reveal and emphasize your faith, and so He sends the cloud. May we not say that the loveliness of the moonlight is revealed and emphasized by the ministry of the cloud? It is when there are a few clouds about, and the moonlight transfigures them, that the glory of the moon herself is declared. And it is when the cloud is in our life that the radiance of our faith is proved and proclaimed. The 'manifold trials' set out in grand relief that which might have remained a commonplace. Light which fringes the cloud is light which is beautified. Faith which gleams from behind the trial is faith which is glorified. It is the hard circumstance that sets in relief the quality of our devotion.

¶ As I listened to a thrush singing in the cold dawn of a winter's morning, I thought its song seemed sweeter and richer than when heard in the advanced days of spring. The wintry setting emphasized the quality of the strain. Perhaps if we heard the nightingale in the glare of the noontide, the song would not arrest us as when it proceeds from the depths of the night. The shades and loneliness add something to the sweetness.[1]

2. But 'the manifold trials' do more than reveal the faith. There is another ministry wrapped up in this suggestive word 'prove.' The trial that reveals the faith also *strengthens and confirms* it. The faith that is 'proved' is more richly endowed. The strong wind and rain which try the tree are also the ministers of its invigoration. The round of the varying seasons makes the tree 'well seasoned,' and solidifies and enriches its fibre. It is the negative that develops the strength of the affirmative. It is antagonism that cultivates the wrestler. It is the trial that makes the saint. The man who sustains his hold upon God through one trial will find it easier to confront the next trial and exploit it for eternal good. And so these 'manifold trials' prove our faith. They reveal and they enrich our resources. They strengthen and refine our spiritual apprehension. They may strip us of our material possessions, 'the gold that perisheth,' but they endow us with the wealth of that 'inheritance' which is 'incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.'

[1] J. H. Jowett, *The Epistles of St. Peter*, 20.

THE WORLD

Well, 'twas a wretched journey!
Why, your dress
Is wet with bitter waters you passed through!
And, in your outmost strain and inmost stress.
No comrade cared, nor companied with you.

THE SOUL

Nay, now you're wrong!
When I passed through the waters deep and high,
I found a Comrade there. Yes, very nigh.
And, but for entering that grievous place,
Perchance I never should have seen the Face
Which makes a weakling stronger than the strong.
What though the force of the flood did try me?
I shall have time to sit, and dry me.

THE FLESH

Ah, what a thorny way! Poor hands of pity!
Why should they strive to reach the Golden City?
Why not a little comfort as the path uncloses. . . .?

THE SOUL

I grieve not. For my hands are full of roses!
They never could have spilt their beauty out
But for the thorn which compassed me about.
Away, thou craven, with the kindly voice!
Why should'st thou pity, when I would rejoice?

THE DEVIL

Stones! Nought but cruel stones!
Stumbling to saintliness through sighs and groans:
Why, what a yesterday!

THE SOUL

What? What? Why, you mistake me.
Those stones could never break me.
Those are my Ebenezers, scattered along the way![1]

[1] Fay Inchfawn, *Through the Windows of a Little House*, 92.

'The Unseen Christ.'

1 Pet. i. 8.—'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice (RV 'rejoice greatly') with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

'I lately read,' says Dr. Stalker, 'from beginning to end one of the masterpieces of modern religious genius, Jonathan Edwards's book on '*The Religious Affections*,' or what we should call the religious feelings or emotions. In that treatise its distinguished author prefixes as a motto this verse, and that may be taken to indicate that this verse is one of the classical expressions of Christian emotion. Is it not a verse that goes straight to the heart of every Christian? "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory." '

It is evident from the animated language of the Apostle that he, and those to whom he wrote, regarded the Lord Jesus, though unseen, as a living and loving Friend. In the case of many, Christianity as a doctrinal system rather than Christ as a person is the theme that almost exclusively occupies them. It was not so with these 'strangers scattered' over the provinces of Asia Minor. Though unseen by the natural eye, Jesus was ever present to the eyes of their heart; though screened from vision by the blue drapery of heaven, behind that veil He was to them a fountain of unutterable joy; though never on earth to be beheld by them, He was loved with an attachment so clinging that they would have parted with all the world a thousand times over rather than let Him go.

1. *Love for the Unseen Christ.*—Why do Christ's disciples love Him? They love Him not merely for what He is, for what He was, for what He is doing for them, and for what He will do; they love Him very specially for what He has done. That which affects them perhaps more than anything else is that He came into the world to seek them, to save them, to die for them—He died for His enemies! His was the inexplicable love that induced Him to lay down His life for His enemies; not only to be made sin, though He knew no sin, but to be made a curse, to give up His own inestimable life in order to secure eternal life for His enemies! This is love which they can never forget.

¶ I have several times been in Spain. A dear friend there was watching over a young Spanish lad, who, he fondly hoped, was to prove a blessing to his countrymen. A dreadful malady—black smallpox—seized the boy and ultimately cut him off. The little fellow in his sickness became a mass of sores, his eyes were closed, and he was altogether a repulsive object. One day his faithful guardian said to him, as he lay blind in his bed, 'Feliciano, I wish to ask you a question. If the Lord Jesus were beside you where I now stand, would you give Him a kiss?' 'A kiss?' and then recollecting himself he said, 'I would give Him ten thousand.' A little while after, his friend said, 'Feliciano, I wish to ask you another question. If the Lord Jesus were here where I stand, do you think He would give you a kiss?' The boy, though conscious of his own repulsiveness of condition, immediately replied, 'He would give me a million.' This indeed was the language of a child under the weakness of disease, yet it suggests the thought that at the very moment when his own little heart declared that he glowed with love to Jesus he knew that his love to Christ was as nothing compared with Christ's love for him. The one love he measured by ten thousand; the other by ten hundred thousand.[1]

¶ There are moods and moments in the Christian experience when no hymn is too glowing, no metaphor too intimate, to express the feelings of the soul who has truly gazed upon the face of the Altogether Lovely, and has been initiated into the meaning of His Cross. To some of us, such moods and moments come all too rarely; yet when they come they leave their traces behind for many a day. Like brother John of Alvernia, who saw his Lord in the wood and for a long time thereafter found in the same spot a holy fire and a most precious fragrance, so do we in

[1] A. N. Somerville, *Precious Seed*, 140.

our more conscious moments of love to Christ come to know a fire that 'burns up the dross of base desire' and a fragrance that makes life sweet.[1]

2. *Faith in the Unseen Christ.*—'Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice.' 'Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' What does that description imply? Is it not this, that faith, issuing like a messenger from the soul, stretches its wings towards objects which are distant and out of sight, and then, laying hold of these remote and invisible things, brings them home to the heart itself, and gives them place and influence there? Thus faith becomes practically the substance of things hoped for, the evidence or demonstration of things not seen.

Notice that in the Apostle's words love comes before belief. This is certainly not what we should have expected. Why is the natural order of things reversed? How can we love before we believe? Must we not first feel convinced of the reality of Christ and the genuineness of His claims? Must we not on this conviction trust Him, and so have love generated in our souls? Is not love plainly and undeniably built upon faith and hope? And yet, if we take the case of one who saw Christ, is it not clear that love to Him must have preceded faith? Would not love spring up at once in witnessing some act of Christ or in listening to some of His words? And yet faith may have involved more difficulty. It was impossible not to love; but how was it possible to believe, on account of the difficulties lying in the expectations regarding the Messiah? Do we not see the love of the disciples to their Master actually struggling to attain to faith in the face of their old beliefs? Love took no heed of these obstacles. For it, in view of Christ, there was no obstruction. It went straight to its object. But faith could not avoid the encounter. It had to grapple with its enemies.

Is the case different with men now? Do not men in general learn to love Christ before they ever question His reality and the genuineness of His claims? How can they help loving Christ? For many souls to read a single page of His life is of necessity to love Him, and with a love corresponding somewhat to the sublimity and tenderness of His character. But faith involves questions which cannot at once be answered. And it is this love which, more than anything else, solves the doubts, keeping the soul near to Christ till they are solved, or constraining it to trust Christ without any definite answer to its questions.

¶ I do not envy those who walk through life with no questionings, no mental struggles. The man who never doubted his own creed can hardly be able to meet the ten thousand objections that a keen thinker can raise against every doctrine that was ever believed by man. However, I think that my heart is in greater danger than my head. If I can but keep my affections set on things above, my faith in Christ Jesus strong, my love to Him deep and fervent, all will be well. But if, on the contrary, zeal flags, devotion cools, hope dies, faith weakens,—then, though the creed is as orthodox as that of Paul himself, everything goes wrong. God save me from spiritual slumber.[1]

The darkened chamber held the maiden dead.
Her name was Faith. Of long neglect she died.
And now men rose and shook themselves and cried,
'O Faith, come back,—come back ere Hope be fled!'
But she lay silent on her solemn bed,
And men grew piteous at their prayer denied;
They said 'No more is man to man allied;
We fall asunder—and the world,' they said.
And while they talked, behold a gracious form,
And Love beside the pillow bending low:
'We live and die together, she and I.'
So then he kissed her, and her flesh grew warm;
She woke and faced them with a ruddy glow.
If Love be living, Faith can never die.[2]

[1] J. M. E. Ross, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 41.

[1] *The Life of R. W. Dale*, 61.
[2] E. C. Lefroy.

3. *Joy from the Unseen Christ.*—'In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Love, Faith, Joy—graces bound up with Christ the Unseen—remind us of three charming roses blooming on one spray. Some persons there are who are suspicious of Christian joy. They feel oppressed by sin, and, being conscious of so much inward corruption as well as of continual shortcoming, not to speak of the evil which they see all around them, they think it more becoming that life should be marked by sorrow than by joy. Now a sense of sinfulness should be ever present, even with the holiest. Still this is no reason why joy should not be possessed and cultivated. Joy, like love and faith, is bought for the Church of God with Christ's own blood. Jesus, on the eve of His agony, said, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.' The fruit of the Spirit is joy. Heaven thrills with joy. The joy we speak of is full of glory—glorified joy, as the original language expresses it. And that which is full of glory, if it descend into the soul, must promote holiness of heart and conformity to Jesus. These strangers were in heaviness, and yet it would appear that at that very time they were rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is a joy which is glorious and glorifying. There are joys that weaken and impair the soul. The happiness of the world is a corroding atmosphere that blunts and destroys the fine perception and discernments of the life. But 'joy in the Lord' is light which glorifies life. It is like sunshine on the landscape. It adds warmth, and beauty, and tenderness, and grace. This joy is never productive of weakness; it is synonymous with power. 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.'

¶ Perhaps nothing was more characteristic of Collier, or comes back more readily to his friends when they recall him, than his big, hearty, infectious laugh. He lived his daily life very near to 'the tears of things,' but nothing could kill the gaiety of his spirit. Few guessed how heavy were the burdens that he carried, he bore them with so light a heart; his vigour was all 'radiant vigour'; sunshine and merriment went with him everywhere. 'The sad heart tires in a mile,' but joy in service is strength for service, and Collier held on his way because he refused to be depressed.

> Seasons impaired not the ray
> Of his buoyant cheerfulness clear.

Indeed, good folk were sometimes taken aback by what seemed an almost dangerous leaning to levity in him. Casual acquaintances who met him at the Manchester Reform Club might say afterwards that he was 'a jolly good fellow,' but not exactly what you call a 'saint.' Well, of course, all depends upon what you mean by a 'saint.' If you mean the traditional saint of the Middle Ages, 'the saint that we see on the walls of every picture gallery in Europe, the saint that still haunts the imagination of hundreds of thousands of devout men who regard the Romish apostasy with horror—the thin, pale face, the eyes red with tears or weary with watching, the transparent hands, the wasted form': if that is our ideal of saintliness, then Collier was as little of a saint as Martin Luther himself. Many religious people, says 'Parson John' in his letter to 'Miriam Gray,' when they talk of religion have a bedside manner, and walk about in felt slippers. And if they speak of God, they always tidy themselves first. But Collier was one of those who go in and out of all the rooms in God's house as though they were quite at home, who open the doors without knocking, and hum on the stairs, and it isn't always hymns either.[1]

The Living Presence.

1 Pet. i. 8.—'Whom not having seen ye love' (RV).

'Not having seen.' That was what was so wonderful to Peter—that these people who had never seen Him, never touched Him, never heard His voice, should love Him; that the invisible Jesus should be so real to them as to evoke passion of any sort was to him a source of perpetual wonder.

[1] G. Jackson, *Collier of Manchester*, 143.

The people to whom Peter is writing in this Epistle are people who are suffering for their faith. Very likely by the time this Epistle was written there were a few who had been flung to the lions because they loved Jesus so much. Peter is really trying to comfort innocent sufferers, as one may see in not a few passages in this Epistle. Their love was such that they were ready and willing to face death (and there is no greater test than that) —and they had never seen Him. Peter had seen Him, had talked with Him and heard Him talk, had been His close and intimate companion; and yet, when the hour of darkness and death came upon Jesus, the man who knew Him so intimately denied Him with oaths and cursings. Yet these people who had never seen Him, never touched Him, knew nothing about such intimate companionship, were willing to be flung to the lions because they loved Him so much. 'Whom not having seen ye love.'

1. It is worth thinking about, how this must have impressed the apostles and companions of Jesus: that people loved Jesus so much and knew Him so well, who had never seen Him. The plain truth is—and it has all been to the good of the Christian Church—that these men who never saw Jesus, never had any conversation with Him, knew His mind. There is nothing in other religions parallel to this; for mark: it was Jesus whom these people loved, Jesus the man, the human being—'warm, sweet, tender, even yet'—Jesus, the man. How was it they loved Him? Of course in some sense it was because He was more than man, but it was the human heart that appealed to them. That surely is unique in religion. You may go to other religions and find plenty of instances of communion with God, but you do not find a communion of this spiritual character, a sense of this intimate touch with the great human Founder of a religion. We do not sing, 'Muhammad, the very thought of thee.' People regard him as a prophet. But the difference is that the Christian does not only worship Jesus; he knows Jesus, he loves Jesus. Here is a startling fact for the sceptic to explain, a fact the sceptic never has explained. There never has been a time since the day Peter wrote this Epistle when he could not have written it again; there never has been a Church to which it could not have been sent. There have been times over and over again when the Church of God has become degenerate, but there has been no Church so degenerate that it would not have been true to say of it, 'Whom not having seen ye love,' and whose love might not have been tested by death itself.

This is true of all ages, and of all places. It wells up in the great hymns of the Church, hymns that go on being sung. You may say they are written by rare and exceptional persons. Yes, but they are not sung by rare and exceptional persons. The hymn that goes on being sung is the hymn that expresses human need, human realization, human aspiration. Take this Epistle in the first century. Then take a leap of a thousand years into the eleventh century, into the dark ages, a time of terrible ecclesiastical degeneracy, a time as deep in degradation as the period before the Reformation; perhaps in some senses deeper. Yet from that day there comes the hymn,

> Jesus, the very thought of Thee
> With sweetness fills my breast.

Out of that time come the lines:—

> But what of those who find? Ah this
> Nor tongue, nor pen can show;
> The love of Jesus, what it is,
> None but His loved ones know.

The heart of faith beat even then. It was true of men in those dark ages that they loved Him whom they did not see. How can people explain this fact away? Unique, universal—this love for the man Jesus. Do you think people would really love Him if He were dead? It is because He lives that they love Him.[1]

¶ The late Dr. Dale recorded how he was once writing an Easter sermon, and when halfway through the thought of the risen Lord broke in upon him as it had never done before. '"Christ is alive," I said to myself. "Alive!" And then I paused. "Alive!" and then I

[1] J. E. Rattenbury.

paused again. "Alive!" Can that really be true? Living as really as I myself am? I got up and walked about repeating, "Christ is living! Christ is living!" At first it seemed strange and hardly true, but at last it came upon me as a burst of sudden glory. Yes, Christ is living. It was to me a new discovery. I thought that all along I had believed it, but not until that moment did I feel sure about it.'

We are not Christians merely because we read the evangelists with the sentimental realism with which we might read some historical novel, and then try to reproduce in imagination the figure of One who thus toiled and taught and suffered in Syria so many centuries ago. That is not enough. 'It is not because He lived, but because He lives, that we have life also.' The New Testament writers never think of Christ as belonging to a bygone past. To them He is the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, and the Living One—alive for evermore. The Resurrection translated Him into our actual present, with all the grace of His earthly living and dying, with all His omnipotence to heal and forgive and save.[1]

2. Look at this from another point of view. We can imagine Peter writing another letter, rather different from this, a letter to the enemies, and not to the friends, of Jesus. In it we can imagine him saying, 'Whom not having seen ye hate.' That hatred of Jesus is just as true evidence of His vital reality as the love that is given to Him. There never has been a time when people have not hated Jesus. The truth is, He was so vital He was a divisive personality. That is always true of vital personalities. If you think of the great statesmen of our own day, there are a good many about whom nobody cares, because they lack vitality. But if you think of men like Gladstone, Chamberlain, Lloyd George, three enormously vital personalities, it is evident that they make parties. People either love them or hate them; there are no neutrals. In a preëminent degree that was true of Jesus. The Son of Man must come dividing people into sheep and goats; He cannot help it. It is always happening. He is either the stone on which men build, or else the stone that grinds to powder.

The late Robert Buchan wrote a work called 'The Wandering Jew.' This legend has entered very profoundly into European literature, art, and music. It is a story of the Way of Sorrow. Jesus was very tired, and He leaned against a door. The householder unlatched the door so that Jesus stumbled and fell. The story was that Jesus cursed him and told him, 'You shall wander to and fro upon the earth until I come.' That is the legend. All sorts of morals have been put to it. Buchanan said the real truth was that Jesus Himself was the wandering Jew, wandering up and down the earth through the centuries, taking the roses from the brow of youth, taking joy and laughter out of life and saying to people who wanted to express themselves that they must deny themselves; and until the world could get rid of this pestilent wandering Jew, who was an incarnate conscience troubling people at every issue of their life, there would be no real brightness and no real joy. Again you see Jesus is hated because He lives. It is always so with the enemies of Jesus. He lives!

3. Whether you think of the love or of the hatred people have given to Jesus, He lives. Jesus rose and ascended, but that does not mean that He went to some far-away planet. He went to the very centre of the universe. He went to the throne of God. He did not get more distant, He got more intimately near; so near that, thanks be to God, there is only just a veil, a thin veil, almost luminous, between us and Him. That is what the great gospel of the Epistle to the Hebrews means. He is so near that we can come in all our sorrow and grief, with all our burdens, to this great High Priest of ours, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who is in the place of authority at the right hand of God. Because He has gone to the centre of all things, to the throne of the Universe, He is so near that His arms are always outstretched to save and to bless us. No, Jesus has never gone away. He is with us, unseen,

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 156.

but all-loving. Thanks be to God, it is as true of Jesus as it is true of God that we cannot escape from His presence. He has so intertwined Himself with the life of the world that there is no getting away from Him. There is no door that can shut Him out. There is no escaping Him.

All history, all nature, are only the garments of the Lord, which, if we touch them with faith, become sacramental vestments. They can become channels of grace, means of healing. He walks through all the centuries, found in every place, in every time. Jesus is alive. It is the greatest of all facts. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the ending. Jesus lives![1]

Wide fields of corn along the valleys spread;
The rain and dews mature the swelling vine;
I see the Lord is multiplying bread;
I see Him turning water into wine;
I see Him working all the works divine
He wrought when Salemward His steps were led;
The selfsame miracles around Him shine;
He feeds the famished; He revives the dead;
He pours the flood of light on darkened eyes;
He chases tears, diseases, fiends away;
His throne is raised upon these orient skies;
His footstool is the pave whereon we pray.
Ah, tell me not of Christ in Paradise,
For He is all around us here to-day.[2]

The Prophets.

1 Pet. i. 10.—'Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently.'

THERE was a pagan conception of prophecy which used as its parable the action of the plectrum on the lyre: the spirit was an external force acting on an instrument which could do nothing but receive; and a voice was heard which said, 'The man sleeps but I wake.' But that pagan conception is not the Biblical conception, which is much more profound and rational: people who can 'seek out and search diligently' are obviously not asleep; they are themselves; they are awake and free. Their powers are consecrated: their observation is quickened: the whole man is kindled. So the message is coloured on one page by the ethical sternness of an Amos, on another by the domestic sorrow of a Hosea, on a third by the natural eloquence of Isaiah—each man bringing as well as receiving, though bringing above all a mind eager to learn what his Lord will teach. But in them and through them, with all their powers and qualities, One mightier than themselves was at work: 'the Spirit of Christ was in them': albeit in partial and preparatory ways they were all His servants.

As the Apostle looks back into those eager eyes of long ago, he seems to see three things reflected in their looks of wonder.

1. One is 'the grace that should come unto you.' It is a favourite idea of the New Testament writers that the extent and glory of the Christian redemption, while contained in the words of the Old Testament writers, was hidden from their full apprehension. It is this that St. Paul speaks of as 'the mystery,' the doctrine that Christ is for the whole world and not for the Jews alone. That mystery had been covered by God's hand through the ages: now in Christ it was open and legible, that all the world might read. When St. Peter wrote, the wonder was not yet gone from the thought that there was grace for all men and a gospel for all nations and a Holy Spirit willing to bestow Himself even upon those who had been called common and unclean. That 'catholic hope,' as Dr. Hort calls it, was now being realized in ways undreamed of, and a new and wonderful significance was being read into the ancient promise, 'the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.'

Lord Christ, and have we found Thee then,
Desire of all the ages,
In fashion as the woman's Seed, conceived and born of her?
Behold Thy pilgrims, mighty Child, and smile upon the sages

[1] J. E. Rattenbury.
[2] J. C. Earle.

That from so far a land have brought their
incense, gold and myrrh.

To Thee, to Thee, through countless years of
blind and bitter groping,
The reek of sacrifice went up beneath the
idol's feet,
To Thee the piteous prayers of men, in
trembling and in hoping,
That satest in the hill of Jove, and in Osiris'
seat.

Arise, O Orient Splendour, rise and shine to
all men living,
From east and west their cry is heard, their
very instant cry,
Arabia, Saba, Tharsis kneel, their richest
treasures giving,
Stand forth, O Jesus, justified in Thine
Epiphany.[1]

2. Another theme on which the prophets gazed from afar with knitted brows was 'the sufferings destined for Messiah and the glories that should follow them': they had foresight of these things; they knew not in what time or season they should come to pass. Nowhere does the Old Testament show its profound insight more clearly than in the place it gives to the idea of vicarious suffering; the sacrificial system was one great complicated parable of the sacrificial principle which is set into the very life of the universe; the prophets had it too, notably in the great picture of the Suffering Servant. There were depths of meaning there which were never fulfilled save in Christ; and yet perhaps we wrong His Cross and make it harder for men to receive the message of His Passion if we view it too much as an isolated portent. This thing after all is in Scripture because it is first in the universe and in life: God's best suffer most, and there is a law of solidarity which binds up the good with the evil. Not once alone has the corn of wheat fallen into the ground and died that it might bring forth fruit abundant. When the Master used the figure of Himself, He was making His Cross the supreme illustration of a great universal law from which He, though the Son of God and the King of men, did not desire to escape.

¶ Perhaps the noblest summary of the Gospel familiar to English ears has been given in Handel's *Messiah*. That wonderful work belongs to no special Church. Every syllable of its language is taken from the Bible. And it pierces and subdues us all not simply by its matchless music, but chiefly because this music recites the whole drama of our redemption from its earliest promise on to its final climax and triumph. If we were to blot out from the *Messiah* every bar of what can be called Passion Music, if we cancelled every word and note which sing of Christ crucified, we might judge from what remained how indelibly revelation is marked with the sign of the cross. . . . To all generations the cross stands as a sign rather than a definition. Yet here, as nowhere else, we discern the very signature of faith; we recognize the hall-mark of the faithful.

One most certain test of our Christianity must be whether we carry in our own habits and characters any corresponding seal. Those individuals and institutions which are set apart for Christian service must surely be marked with the sign of the cross. And the tokens of the true cross in our lives are precisely those acts and decisions of ours which transfix our common selfishness. Whenever we deny ourselves willingly for the sake of others who do not love us, whenever we spend pains and patience to understand those who have no sympathy with us, whenever we give up ease or profit or reputation for the unthankful and the evil, we are beginning to receive the sacred marks of likeness to the Crucified. His call still says, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself.'[2] And nothing carries real spiritual potency and fruitfulness except sacrifice.[1]

3. Yet those who have seen the sufferings have not seen them alone; they have also seen 'the glories that should follow them.' How often the New Testament links together the two thoughts of the suffering and the glory! The risen Lord asked the disciples on the way

[1] Dorothy L. Sayers.

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 43.

to Emmaus: 'Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?' St. Paul loves to compare and contrast the two ideas, as in the famous sentence (2 Cor. iv. 17), where he so carefully balances the one against the other, 'affliction' and 'glory,' a 'light' affliction and a 'weight' of glory, an affliction which is 'but for a moment' and a weight of glory which is 'eternal.' On both sides of the matter the prophets spoke better than they knew: they were explained now by the Cross and by the Crown, by the most holy Passion and by the far-spreading Kingdom which was its fruit and recompense.

The Head that once was crowned with thorns
  Is crowned with glory now;
A royal diadem adorns
  The mighty Victor's brow.

The highest place that heaven affords
  Is His, is His by right,
The King of Kings and Lord of lords,
  And heaven's eternal light,

The joy of all who dwell above,
  The joy of all below
To whom He manifests His love,
  And grants His name to know.[1]

Unity.

1 Pet. i. 12.—'Not unto themselves but unto you.'

'Not unto themselves, but unto you.' Such is the Divine interpretation of the prophet's work. St. Peter has described the earnest strivings with which the heralds of God sought to enter into the full meaning of the chequered message which they were charged to deliver, to give distinctness to the prospect of promised grace, to harmonize the conflicting images of suffering and glory which the Spirit brought before them, to fashion the portraiture of the Christ who should endure and conquer death. And in answer to their anxious and fruitless questionings it was revealed to them—for the lesson is strange to human impatience—that their ministry was not for themselves, but for a later age; that they must bear the burden of perplexity and disappointment, of hope deferred and doubts unresolved, in the sure confidence that others would enter into their labours. And, indeed, such confidence brings all the light that we need for courageous endurance. The crown of service is to know that the service, barren, perhaps, for the moment, will bear fruit in after-time.

Thus the words of the Apostle are a voice of encouragement to all who catch a distant and interrupted vision of the later fulfilment of God's will. The student and the seer may not be able to piece together the many fragments on which they look, but they can recognize that they belong to a glorious whole; they can gladly undertake labours which are directed to gain blessings not for themselves, but for their children; they can enter on the fruition of the larger life by confessing hopes which are beyond their attainment, and preparing for achievements of love which will be the joy of a later generation.

Take one great object of present effort, the attainment of unity.

1. There is among us a growing acknowledgment of the *unity of society* which it will be the strength of our children to realize, a unity in Christ. Everyone speaks of the present tendency towards democracy. But there is a danger lest the outward political interpretation of the phrase should obscure its deeper spiritual meaning. The idea of democracy is not, if we look below the surface, so much a form of government as a confession of human brotherhood. It is the equal recognition of mutual obligations. It is the confession of common duties, common aims, common responsibilities. True democracy—and in this lies its abiding strength—substitutes duties for rights. This substitution changes the centre of gravity of our whole social system, and brings the promise of stable peace.

¶ In the Bardo Museum at Tunis there is, amongst others, a very large mosaic from the ancient and wealthy Roman town of Colonia Lucenia Septima Aurelia Alexandrovia Thugga, the site of which, some 60 miles from

[1] Thomas Kelly.

Tunis, is now largely occupied by the squalid little Arab village of Dougga.

This mosaic is of three colossal Cyclops, working in the cavern forge of Vulcan. The mosaic itself is much injured, but the figures of the Cyclops, those assistants of the God of Fire, as workers with magical powers, remain perfect. They are wielding sledge hammers. The hammer of one has just struck the anvil. The second holds his high over his head, poised in the very act of bringing it down. The third is leaning backwards with his hammer thrown behind him gathering his full strength for the stroke. The rhythmical swing of the three hammers is admirable. The freedom and vigour of the figure drawing deserves to rank with a fresco of Michael Angelo.

The mosaic was executed probably between the years A.D. 160 and 220; but the subject which was the inspiration of the Roman artist may, in this twentieth century, be seen illustrated in the streets of London, probably upon any day of the week. We do not call them Cyclops; we do not endow them with any magical gifts. To us they are just ordinary men, and their work just everyday work. So ordinary and so everyday that most people pass by without even stopping to look, and without the slightest stirring of interest; yet, to those who are possessed of imagination, the work of these modern representatives of the Cyclops is a most fascinating and inspiring thing to watch.

They are breaking up a roadway. The men are four in number instead of three. The blows, instead of being dealt upon an anvil, fall upon a large iron staple sticking upright in the wooden blocks. Otherwise the movements of these great muscular men, and the rhythmical swing of their enormous hammers, reproduce exactly the subject of that old Roman mosaic.

One, two, three, four; one, two, three, four. If they clashed, if one failed to keep time; if, instead of coalescing, they were at variance, how deadly would be the blows of those mighty hammers. Only in harmony of action is there safety and accomplishment.

It is, in the microcosm, the recognition of the immutable law of the macrocosm; rhythm and harmony.

'The essential pagan of the West,' says Mr. Benjamin Kidd, 'has turned in our time to the gross unimaginable materialism of military and economic war.'

It is the sin of separation from others; the sin of the denial of unity; the destruction of rhythm. Every man's hand against his neighbour's. In a word, confusion and suffering.[1]

It is not our work, but the way in which we regard our work, that makes the difference between man and man. It is not the slave's task that makes the slave, but the slave's thought. Till the workman is proud of his work, till he sees and welcomes it as a social service, there can be no rest. But he will be proud of it, he will see its dignity, when he learns that as a member of Christ he serves the whole body in his least function, and shares the one life according to his capacity.

2. There is yet more among us a feeling after a *unity of humanity*, a vaster, fuller, enduring human life, which it will be the joy of our children to realize, a unity in Christ. It is not possible to regard the attitude of nations now one to another, even if Europe is an armed camp, without recognizing that new forces are at work which make for a better understanding between them, which place in a clearer light their complementary endowments and offices for the enrichment of the race, which tend at least to subordinate temporary material interests to the common good, to control the political by the spiritual. The end, indeed, for which we pray, 'peace, unity, and concord among all nations,' will not be reached at once, but slowly, step by step, with many relapses, it may be, and many falls. But it is in sight, and it is seen. The recognition of the variety and the interdependence of forms of national life as contributory to the fullness of Christ is a new thing. If the Stoics spoke of the 'members' of the race, it was without that sense of the One Head in whom we are coming to see the spring and the support of the widest fellowship of mankind.

[1] L. Grant, in *Time and Tide*, Sept. 23, 1921.

¶ Hitherto, it must be confessed, the lessons of the Gospel have not been applied to the problems of international life. During the last three centuries attention has been directed mainly to questions of personal conduct. But the time seems to have now come when Christians as Christians are required to realize and give effect to their creed in the discharge of the widest social duties—the duties not only of class to class, but also of nation to nation—as members of one race. The necessity is the more pressing because the increase of popular power involves the increase of popular responsibility, and for the people, as has been truly said by non-Christian teachers, every question is finally a religious question.

Under this aspect it is evident that Christianity offers a revelation of the purpose of God for the world, and supplies a motive for sustained effort, and gives a clue for movement, which we need but cannot find elsewhere. Christianity rests upon the central fact that *the Word became flesh*. This fact establishes not only a brotherhood of men, but also a brotherhood of nations; for history has shown that nations are an element in the fulfilment of the Divine counsel, by which humanity advances towards its appointed end.[1]

Such thoughts as these of an unrealized unity felt to be attainable, felt to correspond with the idea of creation given back to us in redemption, answer to the spirit of the age. They are in the air. They foreshow, that is, the truths which in the fulfilment of the Divine order are offered to us by the Holy Spirit. They show us how we can each in our measure hasten the time when the fullness of life shall be the common inheritance and the common joy of all. They point forward to the day when the kings of the earth shall bring their honour and glory into the city of God, a city which is the true Holy of holies. It is for the Church in the fulfilment of its prophetic office, even with imperfect and troubled knowledge, to welcome them, to give them shape, and to transmit them to the next age for the guidance and inspiration of its work.

[1] *Life and Letters of B. F. Westcott*, ii. 21.

The Angels.

1 Pet. i. 12.—'Which things angels desire to look into.'

Modern scholarship sees in the doctrine of angels nothing but a tradition derived largely from extraneous sources. But there is nothing *a priori* to render impossible the existence of even many orders or beings intermediate between God and man, who constitute the company of heaven, and with their beauty and their praise add to its glories. The resources of the Divine mind are surely not exhausted in the creation of matter and man; and while we must hold very strongly to the immediate action of God on the spirit of man, as that which Christianity makes the privilege and right of all, there might be room for the use of conscious messengers possessed of sublimated human powers to act at times upon the material world in a way not open to us, and yet in a way which God has precluded Himself from doing.

1. The angels are a higher race than man. The New Testament assumes that they belong to a higher order of life: for man has been made just a little lower than the angels. Christ's remark that they do not marry entails not only that they are sexless, but that they are created direct, not procreated, and, therefore, that they have no infancy, growth, or decline, but issue into existence at the command of God with perfect natures and mature minds. They are in possession of more than human powers.

(1) There are open to them the spheres of heaven and earth, and they pass from one to the other with perfect facility. They have superhuman yet not supernatural strength, and they are able to impart this strength to human beings, as in the case of the angels that strengthened Christ in the garden. They can pass unharmed through elements that would destroy the flesh. They have a superior beauty, for we are told that at the trial of Stephen his face looked like the face of an angel, transfigured by the joy of suffering for the sake of Christ, and by the prospect of glory.

(2) But it is chiefly in their perfect obedience to God that they excel mankind. Apart from the curious legend that there were angels of heaven who sinned and fell, and the ascription of folly to them in the Book of Job, the general impression is that the angels are not only sinless, but incapable of sin. They stand in the immediate presence of God, ceaselessly adoring and chanting His praise, creatures who know nothing but joy, and who live solely to express it. Their life is simply to obey the commands of God, acting like a well-disciplined host, entrusted with important messages and stupendous tasks, but carrying on these simply as bidden, without self-interest or concern, so that they perform delightful or awful tasks with equal satisfaction.

(3) Their praise is, however, not mechanical. They rejoice over the redeeming work of God. They sing together at the creation of the world; their anthems at the Incarnation are so tumultuous that they break beyond the portals of heaven and fall on human ears. They understand sufficiently to rejoice over one sinner that repents more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance. They can learn a new song, and they thunder forth the praises of Christ returning triumphant from His war with sin and death.

2. And yet their understanding is strictly limited. Jesus maintains that they share with Himself in His earthly condition an ignorance of the future. They are not admitted into the Father's secrets. They do not know how the purposes of God work out. Perfect in obedience, swift to act on the spoken command, they cannot discern when the end shall come or how. They have no access, therefore, to the unrevealed mind of God; they are not privy to His great designs.

(1) And here, as our text tells us, they are less proficient than the prophets. The Apostle seems to suggest that the prophets cannot always understand their own predictions. They pore over them to see if they can discover when or how they are going to be fulfilled. And yet they do see the future, however dimly. This they must arrive at therefore, not by information simply imparted, but by moral insight. They know what must happen, because they know the nature of God. Now it is just this knowledge, this prediction founded on moral insight, that is hidden from the angels.

(2) Especially does it seem to be hinted that they would like to know why Christ should have to suffer. This is wholly inexplicable to them. They can minister to the suffering Christ, legions wait but the word to rescue Him from the hand of man, they can welcome His triumphant return and praise Him for salvation accomplished, but why it should be through pain and death they cannot understand. They cannot understand sin, they do not know what death means; and that the very Joy and Light of heaven should have to pass through this experience awakens in them the great desire to know why it was necessary and why it should be. Calvary is a mystery to the angels of God.[1]

The Angels' Curiosity.

1 Pet. i. 12.—'Which things angels desire to look into.'

RUSKIN says: There is a mean curiosity, as of a child opening a forbidden door, or a servant prying into her master's business; and a noble curiosity, questioning, in the front of danger, the source of the great river beyond the sand,—the place of the great continents beyond the sea;—a nobler curiosity still, which questions of the source of the River of Life, and of the space of the Continent of Heaven,—things which 'the angels desire to look into.'[2]

The belief that there are limitations to angelic knowledge is common to Jewish and early Christian writers. The clearest allusion in St. Paul is in Eph. iii. 10, where he says that he has been entrusted with the preaching of the mystery which has been hidden from the ages (namely, the admission of the Gentiles to the blessings of the gospel), that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God. This

[1] W. E. Orchard.
[2] *Sesame and Lilies*, 29.

striking description of the revelation to the heavenly hosts of God's wisdom through the founding of a church on earth finds an echo in our text. Of Jewish parallels, none of which rise to the grandeur of St. Paul's conception, the following may be noted: Enoch (Eth. En. xvi. 3) is bidden to tell the fallen angels, 'You have been in heaven, and though the hidden things had not yet been revealed to you, you knew worthless mysteries, and these in the hardness of your hearts ye have recounted to the women.' *Cf.* Slav. En. xxiv. 3, 'Not even to My angels have I told My secrets, nor have I informed them of their origin, nor have they understood My infinite creation which I tell thee of to-day,' xl. 3, 'Not even the angels know the number' (of the stars and the heavenly hosts). It is the secrets of Nature which are here regarded as being hidden from the angels; with St. Paul it is the great scheme of the world's redemption.

The things into which angels desire to look are, according to the eleventh verse, 'the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.' This, it is said, is what was testified beforehand by the prophets, when they spake of the salvation of the Church. This it was which they desired to investigate, that they might understand the time, and manner of the time, when it should occur; and this, which they spake of, and which they studied, is that which did come to pass in the time of the Apostles, and was by them, reported to the world.

1. *Christ's Incarnation.*—This was necessary, that He might be capable of suffering. 'He was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' He emptied Himself of His glory, and appeared in the likeness of man. As the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise took part of the same. And He did this in order that 'through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death,' in order that by suffering He might be made perfect as the Captain of Salvation. This fact, of the Incarnation of the Son of God, was necessarily involved in that of His sufferings. And to this, therefore, we may naturally suppose the angelic attention to be directed. Perhaps this circumstance may be referred to by the Apostle when he says: 'Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels'; contemplated by them with awe and surprise while appearing in our world in association with a sensitive and suffering nature. The incarnation of Christ might have drawn the attention of heaven had He appeared upon earth to triumph and to reign, instead of to suffer, had He appeared in the most splendid rank of humanity, and assumed the most elevated position. But to Him all rank, and station, and grandeur, and opulence were poor and despicable things; and those who in heaven had been commanded to worship Him, and who had veiled their faces before His glory there, would have seen nothing to admire in His unlimited possession of the distinctions of earth, nothing but the mysterious condescension which could induce Him, in any form, to visit it at all.

¶ When the Eternal Son was made flesh and entered the world of time He went down into the nethermost depths of human evil and misery. He who was in the form of God, yet counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the Cross. Redemption began with the immeasurable self-abasement of the Redeemer. The All-Holy has taken upon Himself our shame and guilt. The All-Blessed has agonized under our evil. The King of kings has made Himself a servant of servants. The Immortal Love has tasted death for us all. He chose to stoop. He endured a self-beggary so absolute, a descent so profound, that when we try to fathom its meaning we can only whisper in amazement and adoration, 'O the depth!'

In recent years, a species of self-humiliation has to some extent become a fashion, almost a fad. People who consider themselves to belong to the upper classes have gone down to mix with what they call the lower orders, and even lodged awhile in mean back-streets. They do it from mingled motives—some out of genuine pity and interest, others to make

an experiment in social theories, others to find a stimulus to jaded sensations, others to rake up copy for a novel out of the lower parts of the earth. And though they may fail to effect much good, they can hardly escape learning some wholesome lessons.

But the capital defect about most abnegations of this kind is just here: they somehow seem forced, and constrained, and unnatural. Such persons constantly feel, and make their neighbours feel also, that they *have* descended. It is a condescension on their part; and this taints their sacrifice. They stoop; but they are consciously superior persons all the time. No spirit can be more utterly alien to the heart of God. Surely Jesus Christ nailed the sin of condescension to His own Cross. The supreme quality about our Lord's humiliation was its perfect naturalness. He stooped without an effort. He forgot to count how much it cost. People never felt that He was dragging Himself down to their level. He took the lowest place because He was indeed lowly in heart. When Christ descended to the nethermost parts of the earth men recognized that He was really at home there—nay, they cast it at Him that He went to His own place. The Pharisees pointed the finger of scorn, and whispered that He chose the company He was fit for—this Friend of publicans and sinners![1]

2. *Christ's sufferings.*—His sufferings themselves were objects into which, as facts, the angels are said to look. These included all that was physical, all that flowed from His capacity to experience pain by hunger, thirst, fatigue, death: all that was moral, whatever lacerated sensibility by the insults and ridicule, the unfeeling contempt, and the cruel mockings of His exasperated persecutors; all that was spiritual, whatever could impart pain to His pure and immaculate spirit by the presentation before it of positive sin; and all that was mental, that mysterious amazement which overwhelmed and oppressed Him, when His soul experienced its painful travail, and when His body, from the workings of His mind, was suffused with a perspiration tinged with blood.

3. *Christ's glories.*—The glories that followed the sufferings of Christ are represented as another subject of celestial meditation. These glories include everything connected with the consummation of the personal work of the Redeemer, the establishment of His Kingdom in the world, and the everlasting salvation of His Church. The glories that succeeded the sufferings of Christ, therefore, were—the glory of His resurrection from the dead; the glory of His ascension into heaven; the glory of His triumphant entry into the holiest of all; and the glory of the position which He occupies, and the work which He accomplishes. Then, besides these, there was the glory of the descent of the Spirit, and the continued grandeur and magnificence of the signs, and wonders, and miracles which were achieved by the Apostles wherever they went as the heralds of the gospel and ambassadors of Christ. And, still farther, besides all these outward indications of the glory which succeeded the sufferings of Christ in the establishment of His visible Kingdom upon earth, there were the moral and spiritual glories, which surpass every other, and which continue to be seen in the converting and sanctifying influences of the truth. By the preaching of the Cross angels saw such glories follow as had not been anticipated. Multitudes were born to God, passed from darkness to light, felt the knowledge of the glory of God shine upon them, and from being 'dead in trespasses and in sins,' rose into the rank of reasonable and religious beings, becoming children of light, conformed to the image of Christ, and called to glory and virtue.

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 97ff.

The Angels' Envy.

1 Pet. i. 12.—'Which things the angels desire to look into.'

In this passage the Apostle is discussing the unique privilege of modern men, those of us who live under the blessings of Christ's day. He frankly considers these privileges astound-

ing. Indeed, with a certain wistfulness, he wonders whether we really apprehend and appreciate the glory of our opportunities. In order to foster the growth of wonder in us he relates here how the ancient prophets looked forward, with envy and longing, to our day of knowledge and privilege. What they would have given just to change places with us! How they longed to know the fullness of truth which is now our Christian inheritance! But they died—tantalized souls—they died with their hungry eyes unsatisfied.

This is the same point which Christ made so forcibly: 'Verily I say unto you, many prophets and righteous men have desired to see these things which ye see, and have not seen them: and to hear these things which ye hear, and have not heard them.'

We are indeed the heirs of the ages, and their envy!

With this said, the Apostle now adds the rather queer and quaint conceit which underlies the text. To us, practical Anglo-Saxons, it may seem a daring flight of imagination. At least it has a touch of real poetry at its heart.

What is it then, in this chequered life of ours, that might be the source of angels' envy?

1. First, simply what we are—the very mystery and majesty of our complex human nature, the dreaming personal soul we have and are. In its heights and depths, in the sweep of its possibilities, our human nature may be the marvel of angels.

To see this, remember what the men of the Apostle's day thought about these angels. We know that they regarded them as a race of untempted beings, creatures equally beyond passion and sin, created good, and with no bias of temperament or seduction or inherited taint against which they must struggle with unwinking vigilance; creatures who were simply the untroubled passionless messengers of God!

How different our tempted soul is from this! We often imagine that it would be a great boon if only we were like that. How we wish, especially when the tides of our soul run strongly, that we too were free from the dreadful agony of choice and debate!

Well, any man who wants that type of goodness is welcome to it. If, like these fabled beings, I am good only because I can't be otherwise: if I am pure only because I am untempted: if I stand only because I cannot fall: tell me of what moral value is my goodness? But here is the glory of human greatness, that, having the power to fall, we yet choose to stand, and having freedom to sin, we yet deliberately and with agony may choose God and goodness. That goodness, passionately chosen, is worlds above a goodness that cannot be otherwise. And it is this possible grandeur of the human soul, scarred with battle, that may be the angels' envy, for it is something greater than an untempted angel can possibly know.

2. In the second place, these angels—and this is the particular application of the passage—envy the wonderful provision which God in His love has devised for us. They gaze amazed at Jesus, at the lonely Cross, at the 'new life' which we draw from our Lord, 'which things the angels desire to look into.' But being untempted they know no sin, and being without sin they know nothing of the joy of forgiveness and the pricelessness of One who redeems. And so they gaze with wondering eyes.

You will notice that it is only when the Apostle mentions the great salvation offered us in Jesus that he adds our text about the angels' envy. He pictures them—remember it is only a picture, a flash of poetry—he pictures them peering down. They see a little hill outside Jerusalem. They see on the little hill a gaunt cross. They see on the cross the lonely figure of Jesus, the supreme proof of God's care for men. And when they grasp the wonder of what it means, in the passion of God, their eyes grow large with longing, that they, even they, might share such a token of the pity and grace of God.

The point here is: These untempted and unsinning beings can never know the wonder of God as we do, for they can never know His heart of grace. We have seen into God's heart as they never can: we have seen reaches of His soul hidden from all those

who do not need forgiveness. The God of Jesus—Jesus who suffered for us—is something thereby to us that He can never be to any race or class of creatures who need no salvation.

There is a certain truth in the idea that we who are sinners can know the heart of God better than any untempted saint. It is only a broken and repentant sinner who can know the ecstasy of forgiveness and reinstatement. It is only the wanderer, lost in the mists of the hills, who can experience the happiness of home-coming. It is only the man who is faint with hunger who can appreciate the joy of food. This is the Apostle's argument—that God has revealed Himself to us in special and wonderful ways, and these ways are the angels' envy. For the secret of God's heart and character, surely, is His pity: not His law, nor His justice, nor His purity: but His gracious forgiveness, His abounding love, and His inexplicable grace. These, to the Apostle, are fully summarized in Jesus. We alone, broken human beings, know the joy of being redeemed. 'Which things, in their beautiful mystery, the angels desire to look into.' [1]

I have wept a million tears:
  Pure and proud one, where are thine,
What the gain though all thy years
  In unbroken beauty shine?

All your beauty cannot win
  Truth we learn in pain and sighs:
You can never enter in
  To the circle of the wise.

They are but the slaves of light
  Who have never known the gloom,
And between the dark and bright
  Willed in freedom their own doom.

Think not in your pureness there,
  That our pain but follows sin:
There are fires for those who dare
  Seek the throne of might to win.

Pure one, from your pride refrain:
  Dark and lost amid the strife
I am myriad years of pain
  Nearer to the fount of life.[2]

[1] James Black, in *United Free Church Sermons*, 23.
[2] A. E.

The Mental and the Spiritual.

1 Pet. i. 13.—'Gird up the loins of your mind.'

The girding up of the loins was in itself merely such a gathering and fastening up of the long Eastern garments as would interfere least with running or other active motion. It was a symbolic act of the paschal ceremonies to denote the readiness for the prompt march out of Egypt through the desert (Exod. xii. 11), and is applied to Jeremiah's preparation for his prophetic office (i. 17). Our Lord includes it in His teaching of the disciples to be as servants waiting for their Lord (Luke xii. 35); and it had a specially sacred association for St. Peter personally in connextion with the feet-washing described in Jn. xiii. 4-16, as we see in 1 Pet. v. 5.

The metaphor is the same as that in our colloquial speech when we talk about a man 'pulling himself together.' Just as an English workman will draw his belt a hole tighter when he has some special task to do, so St. Peter says to us, Make a definite effort, with resolute bracing up and concentration of all your powers, or you will never see the grace that is hurrying towards you through the centuries.

The metaphor reappears in the same connexion in Seneca, 'Let the mind stand ready-girt, and let it never fear what is necessary but ever expect what is uncertain.'

The word translated 'mind' is a word of wide use in Greek, answering most nearly to our mind. It is often opposed to body, and includes all in man that thinks. Let us compare it with the soul.

1. *The Mind and the Soul.*—'Gird up the loins of your mind,' the forces of your thinking power. Let us never forget that this exhortation lies not only in the Bible but in the very heart of one of its transcendently spiritual paragraphs. The Apostle here is full of the Resurrection glory of the Lord, of the 'joy unspeakable' in Him to which His true followers even now are called, and of that wonderful prospect, His desired, His promised

return, 'the appearing of Jesus Christ.' For St. Peter, amidst just this crowded scene of spiritual mysteries and raptures, the human mind is called all the while to walk and act. It is summoned to self-discipline, to resolution, to energy and enterprise: 'Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end.'

Pious Christians have been accused sometimes of going the other way, and of regarding the intellect as if its energies in the regions, for example, of science, or of history, or of number, or its glorious pleasures in the fair fields of imagination, were in themselves unhallowed. There was a sarcasm levelled not very long ago against a supposed characteristic phrase of Christian preachers—'the unsanctified intellect.' True, the intellect if unsanctified, like the eyes if unsanctified, and the tongue if unsanctified, that is to say, if divorced from Christian reverence and purity, may be used for deadly mischief; but this is no more to say that the mind is in itself a profane thing than to say that the body is profane because of its awful possible misuse. And who does not know that it is precisely the Bible which proclaims all along the mysterious sacredness of the body, and reveals, in Christ, its destiny to a deathless glory?

> Man's mind, what is it but a convex glass
> Wherein are gathered all the scattered points
> Picked out of the immensity of sky,
> To reunite there, be our heaven for earth,
> Our known unknown, our God revealed in man? [1]

2. *The Soul and the Mind.*—On the other hand, let us think of the influence which the spiritual, in its common Christian sense, is meant manifestly to exercise upon the mental in us. To speak popularly, what is the soul meant to do for the mind? How is the student, how is the thinker, intended to be the better student and the better thinker for being also a Christian?

For some such beneficial power of soul on mind we must assuredly look as a matter of course, if we hold the Christian theory of man. If we do so, we believe that the heart and radiating centre of our human personality is the image of God within us. We believe, with the very largest and amplest warrant from the Divine Book answering to our own profoundest consciousness, that we finite and dependent beings bear, nevertheless, the infinite within us. Not only is the mysterious cogitative power itself, with its 'thoughts that wander through eternity,' always transcending the visible, the material, the narrowly intelligible. That other mystery, importunate, imperative, imperial, the voice of Conscience, is evermore asserting within us our relation to the Supreme Existence as at once Law and Person, Holiness and Will. We know, in presence of conscience, unless we are artificially resisting our own nature, that we are, in a sense transcending all other relations, related to God. Let the intellect be busy with ever such abstruse problems; for example, let it be intent upon the science of matter and of force, upon the very last and most subtle speculations of inductive natural philosophy; and then let the thinker be arrested on a sudden, just there, by some intrusive question of right and wrong in his own conduct. He knows which claim is predominant. Not all the scientific investigations in the world dare, in the supreme order to which his soul bears witness, take precedence within him over that awful sanctity, the command to be pure, and to do right.

¶ O these words 'ought' and 'ought not,' 'right' and 'wrong'—how often men, how often we ourselves, would fain have banished them from the dictionary! Thank God they are not man-made words, and therefore cannot be man-changed. They shine aloft like stars. They are written—as David indicates in that glorious twin song of nature and human nature—they are written with the same ink that catalogues the stars; they are His sign-manual who hung these nightly seals. . . . My brother, when next the tempter says 'Transgress,' 'Do the forbidden,' 'Touch the accursed,' 'Handle the pitch-stained thing,' wilt thou not say, 'Dost thou bid me pluck the planets from their courses, cover the

[1] Browning.

spangled heavens with sackcloth? Bid me as soon pull the strong firmament down. How can I do this great, because abnormal, thing?'[1]

But what will be in particular the significance, what the influence, of the soul for the understanding? In two momentous directions in the Christian student's life it will act as a power of untold benefit.

In the first place, it will come in always to caution and to humble, to teach the glorious modesty of worship, to bring the man, with all the materials and processes of his knowledge, into right relations of thought with the ultimate and infinite glory of his Maker, the Author of his being, the Father of his spirit. It will save him from that absurd and most dangerous opinion that true thought has nothing to do with fear; as if awe meant cowardice; as if premises could be complacently linked to premises, till even blasphemous conclusions should result, and yet there should be no need to pause and worship a little, and then go back to see if some link of the eternal sort has not been omitted from the chain.

(2) And if the spiritual is the wholesome humbler and cautioner of the intellectual, it is also to the very full the power of all others to animate the intellectual, and elevate it, and dilate it into an ever-growing maturity, lifting it almost as it were from its feet upon its wings. This gives to thought upon every subject worth thinking of, a dignity, an importance, an even sacred interest, which is able to raise it to the highest levels.

This is obvious where the mind is busy with truths of the directly religious order; but not in those cases only. The student of human history, the student of the history of Nature, animate or inanimate, the investigator of number and figure, the explorer of the literary monuments of the mind, of old civilizations, of modern evolutions of man's life and energy —all are to feel that power; each and all are to find not only a cautioning but a magnificently inspiring influence in the perpetual recollection that he, the student, is a spiritual being, made in the image of the eternal Wisdom and Love, redeemed by the action of the Eternal, borne onward by His grace to an eternal destiny of bliss, and holiness and loving power; and that every range of existence, every law of thought, bears profound relations to Him, the Keystone of the universe of creation, 'in whom all things consist.'

¶ Newton, dying, spoke of his pebbles picked from the beach while the ocean of eternal truth rolled its unfathomed fields before him. Butler, troubled in his saintly soul, as he drew near eternity, by the thought of the infinite Holiness, stayed himself in death, like a little child, upon the text, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' Sedgwick, patriarch of English geology, passed to his Redeemer's presence, near his ninetieth year, murmuring out, 'Washed in the blood of the Lamb, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.' Clerk Maxwell, illustrious name in the first ranks of modern science, all too early called away, in his noble 'Student's Evening Hymn' sang to his Lord the prayer,

> Through the creatures Thou hast made
> Show the brightness of Thy glory;
> Be eternal truth display'd
> In their substance transitory.

John Herschel, even in his sleep, said to his soul, in words written down on his awaking—

> Throw thyself on thy God, nor mock Him
> with feeble denial,
> Sure of His love and O sure of His mercy
> at last;
> Bitter and deep though the draught, yet
> drain thou the cup of thy trial,
> And in its healing effects smile at the
> bitterness past.

Brewster exclaimed in the hour of his transition, 'I will see Jesus, who made the worlds, and that will be grand.'[1]

Hard Thinking.

1 Pet. 1. 13.—'Gird up the loins of your mind.'

St. Peter is here interpreting words which he had heard from the lips of his Lord and

[1] R. W. Barbour, *Thoughts*, 22.

[1] H. C. G. Moule, *Christ's Witness to the Life to Come*, 105.

Master. It is a mistake to assume that, because the writers of these Epistles do not cite the teaching of Christ, they ignored it or were indifferent to it. They had gripped the full meaning of the personality of Christ far too securely to permit of any clear distinction between His teaching, His cross, and His eternal glory. Their whole being was penetrated by the Lord Jesus; consequently we often find the sayings which are recorded in the Gospel conveyed to us in a molten form through the channels of apostolic utterance. So it is here. 'Let your loins be girded about'' are the words of Jesus. 'Gird up the loins of your mind,' says the Apostle.

St. Peter does not give this injunction as an isolated precept. It is intimately associated with the exhortation which immediately follows it. Gird up the loins of your mind,—so we ought to read—be sober. The sobriety here indicated is a state of mind which is to be reached through the process of girding up the loins. It is not merely temperance or chastity that is in view. Whatever else the writers of the New Testament may have been, they were not just apostles of the obvious. What is here implied is surely this: You must make an active effort of the mind. As a runner or fighter will free himself from the encumbrance of loose garments, so you must gain that intelligent alertness, that sobriety of outlook, which will make your actions correspond, not with the night that is departing, but with the day that is coming.

Look how St. Peter continues: 'Be sober,' he says, 'and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. True sobriety, whether in thought, in temper, or in action, depends not upon a conservatism which is often vain because it has memory without vision, but upon a conscious mental effort to realize the Christian ideal as if it were already present. 'Set your hope perfectly'—it must be a full-orbed hope that does not shrink from the full Christian ideal as something unrelated to this present evil world—'set your hope perfectly' on that Christ which is to be—that is the true meaning—on things which shall at last be unveiled in His presence.

Let us apply this to some present-day problems.

1. Look for example at the great problem of industrial peace. To-day to speak of any section of the British people as the lower orders is already an impertinent anachronism. One of the first duties that lies before us is to banish for ever those shreds and tatters of privilege which still mar the unity of the nation. And what is more, the whole nation must be made to share as it has never done before in that ampler, fuller, higher life of England apart from which it is difficult to see why any man should think his country worth fighting for.

If this is to be attained—nay, if the nation is to be saved from internal conflicts infinitely more serious than those threatening that imperfect unity which preceded the outbreak of war—we shall have to devote a power of hard, earnest, unselfish thinking to the industrial problem. We shall have, it may be, to free ourselves from immemorial prejudices, and to open questions which the traditions of our education may have taught us to regard as closed. And that thinking has got to be done in an awakened way.

¶ Fellowship is the Christian as well as the democratic ideal of life. The Church is meant to be a fellowship, and to bring together into a single unit all those who, being the children of God, are brothers one of another. Since this is the Christian ideal, the devil sets himself to overthrow it in every possible way. He has many weapons to hand: hatred, war, suspicion, unfair dealings, and so on. But by far his strongest weapon is class-consciousness. Within the family of God all men are equal. The existence of classes, of social distinctions of any kind, is a wrong greater than we can estimate or conceive. It is a disgusting as well as a most un-Christian thing to act, speak, or even to feel towards anyone as if he or she were an inferior. It is equally wrong and despicable to act the part of a sycophant to one whom we imagine to be our superior. Superiority and inferiority are not measured by such standards as birth (an accident), wealth (an anomaly), or intellect (a gift). The only standard by which men can ever be

compared the one to the other is the standard of character. Even this comparison is not possible for man; it is only valid when all the facts of life, every action, thought and word can be estimated at their true value. Such a valuation is impossible for man; it is the prerogative of God alone. It is enough for man to know that all men are brethren, and to act upon this knowledge.[1]

2. But there are other considerations which are no less serious. Nine-tenths of the people are producers, but the wealth produced is in the hands of one-tenth of the people. The position of the skilled artisan has unquestionably improved, but it is still true that something like one-quarter of the population lives on the border-line of poverty. No greater disaster could befall the nation than the degradation of the standard of life which has been already reached by the manual worker. The problem, therefore, which confronts us is not merely to produce greater wealth, but so to distribute it as to gain for larger sections of the population not only security from the risks of physical want, but opportunities for a larger and more liberal life.

¶ What a burden has not Industrialism laid on Humanity. Industry exerted in a sordid selfish spirit leads to widespread social degradation. It becomes a search after wealth and material products in utter disregard of the producers and even of the very society that is to consume. The erection of this greed into a sham philosophical gospel of selfishness (called Political Economy) teaches men that their duty to society is to be selfish, greedy, unsympathetic, to believe mankind uniformly actuated by low material objects, and society to exist for a low material object. . . .

What has been the result?

Industrialism is ever making gigantic steps towards new triumphs of material progress, and yet under it Humanity does not materially advance.

There is only one way by which the social sympathies can be disciplined, hallowed, and stirred up to take permanent command of our nature, and that is by systematically holding out to them, as the basis and end of human life, Humanity—the duty of the individual to Humanity. . . .

In face of the horrors of modern anarchy in labour, the unbridled lust of wealth, the tremendous power of selfish capital, the mountain of human suffering and misery which cries out aloud, 'How long, O Man, how long,' a mass of appalling want and pity—in face of that nothing can chain up this fierce power, but the sense of social duty to a visible Humanity of which we are each children and servants.[1]

3. Then there is the great subject of national education. Here if anywhere we have need to repent, as a nation, of niggard narrowness and blind stupidity. We are not going to compare our standard with those of other nations. We would think rather of the claim of every member of the community to that fullness of opportunity which is the correlative of their duties, and to which the equal devotion of all in the recent hour of an universal need has established their indefaceable title. The time has passed when we can talk of England's battles as won on the playing-fields of Eton. Henceforth every school must be an Eton, the meanest playground a rival of those winsome meadows which skirt the silver Thames.

¶ In the schools class distinction must be obliterated; money and social position must confer no special privileges. The people have the right to give to their own children the best opportunities that are available, and no one can claim more. Professor Dewey, in *Schools of To-morrow*, describes what is being done in America in the way of experiment on new lines.

'The problem of educational readjustment thus has to steer between the extremes of an inherited bookish education and a narrow so-called practical education. It is comparatively easy to clamour for a retention of traditional materials and methods on the ground that they alone are liberal and cultural. It is comparatively easy to urge the addition of

[1] H. L. Hubbard, in *The Commonwealth*, August 1922.

[1] Frederic Harrison, *On Society*, 340ff.

narrow vocational training for those who, so it is assumed, are to be the drawers of water and the hewers of wood in the existing economic *régime*, leaving intact the present bookish type of education for those fortunate enough not to have to engage in manual labour in the home, shop or farm.

There must not be one system for the children of parents who have more leisure and another for the children of those who are wage-earners. The physical separation forced by such a scheme, while unfavourable to the development of a proper mutual sympathy, is the least of its evils. Worse is the fact that the over-bookish education for some and the over-"practical" education for others brings about a division of mental and moral habits, ideals and outlook. The academic education turns out future citizens with no sympathy for work done with the hands, and with absolutely no training for understanding the most serious of present-day social and political difficulties. The trade training will turn out future workers who may have greater immediate skill than they would have had without their training, but who have no enlargement of mind, no insight into the scientific and social significance of the work they do, no education which assists them in finding their way on, or in making their own adjustments. A division of the public school system into one part which pursues traditional methods, with incidental improvements, and another which deals with those who are to go into manual labour, means a plan of social predestination totally foreign to the spirit of a democracy.

The democracy which proclaims equality of opportunity as its ideal requires an education in which learning and social application, ideas and practice, work and recognition of the meaning of what is done, are united from the beginning and for all.'[1]

¶ The type and range of education given to a British child to-day depend not on the needs or particular capacity of the child, but upon the position and financial means of his parents. A's child, mentally slow, may long for the cowboy's or the woodman's life, and is pushed (with difficulty) through a Public School or University. B's child is intellectually brilliant, reaches the seventh standard of a crowded city school at eleven years old, marks time there for three years, and then begins his life work as a railway van-boy. The sole reason for this difference is that A's income is ten times as large as B's.[2]

[1] Lucy F. Morland, *The New Social Outlook*, 54.
[2] Excerpt from Report of the Commission on Education at the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship, Birmingham, April 1924.

SOBRIETY.

1 Pet. i. 13.—'Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober.'
Rom. xii. 3.—'To think soberly.'

'SOBER' in ordinary modern English is a word with a somewhat restricted application. When we say that a man is sober we mean as a rule merely that he is not drunk. But if we go past the popular colloquial usage we find that the word has a much wider and richer meaning. In the phrase quoted from Romans it is used to translate a word meaning *sound thinking*, while in the verse of St. Peter, 'Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober,' 'be sober' is the imperative of a verb meaning 'abstain,' 'hold yourself back.' Both of these fit the older sense of the word as meaning not merely seriousness, but a *balanced* seriousness, the result of a wise and deliberate self-control, not purposeless but based upon knowledge. It does not mean merely control of physical indulgence. The mind can become stupefied and deranged by the force of more spiritual causes—imaginations and desires—and so lose the mastery over itself as completely as if it had suffered an intoxication. Thus sobriety of mind comes to mean moral soundness or health, the dominion of reason over desire.

To be 'sober-minded' certainly implies and includes sobriety, in the common sense of the word; for no man can have the right use of his mental and spiritual faculties if his

animal appetites are permitted to get the better of him. At the same time, it is quite possible to be strictly and even scrupulously temperate in regard to every kind of bodily indulgence, and yet come short by a long way of the quality that is enjoined in the text. This soberness of mind points to a wise balancing or adjustment of all the various parts of our complex being, so as to give a moral symmetry to the character; for every man should aim at being a complete and well-proportioned man, faithful in all his relations, alike to himself, to his fellow-men, and to God.

1. *Sobriety does not imply stolidity,* or stoical indifference to considerations of pleasure and pain; it is not ascetic disregard of the existence or inclinations of all save the highest elements in our nature. These are but spurious imitations of true sobriety; and, as is so often the case with imitations, they are opposed to the fundamental characteristics of that which they would imitate, and are often indeed, obviously enough, forms of moral or intellectual insobriety. Sobriety regulates, but does not exterminate—modifies, but does not ignore—our natural propensities, which in themselves become good or bad only as they are kept in their proper place, or allowed to depart from it. Neither is sobriety to be confused with phlegmatic dullness and insensibility; on the contrary, it is perfectly compatible with the loftiest enthusiasm, and is often the guide and supporter of burning zeal. It does not quench, but rather, so to speak, criticizes our fervour by submitting it to the test of truth. But when this test has been passed its force is increased, not diminished, in that it has become more masculine and rational than it was before.

We must not fail to distinguish between sobriety and moroseness. There is nothing gloomy, nothing misanthropic, nothing affected or *un*natural, though much that is *super*natural, in the sober life. The sober Christian sees things, not so much by the 'dry light' of the ancient philosopher as in the warm light of Divine love that pervades everything. Despondency and anxiety are as much opposed to true sobriety as levity, flippancy, and thoughtlessness. The sober man can afford to be happy and cheerful; for he knows that all things work together for his good, and that a golden thread of Divine purpose runs through all the tangled web of his human experience.

¶ It is so generally taken for granted that a life strictly dedicated to religion is stiff and dreary, that I may have some difficulty in persuading my readers that, as a matter of fact, in these early days of my childhood, before disease and death had penetrated to our slender society, we were always cheerful and often gay. My parents were playful with one another, and there were certain stock family jests which seldom failed to enliven the breakfast table. My Father and Mother lived so completely in the atmosphere of faith, and were so utterly convinced of their intercourse with God, that, so long as that intercourse was not clouded by sin, to which they were delicately sensitive, they could afford to take the passing hour very lightly. They would even, to a certain extent, treat the surroundings of their religion as a subject of jest, joking very mildly and gently about such things as an attitude at prayer or the nature of a supplication. My Mother was sometimes extremely gay, laughing with a soft, merry sound. What I have since been told of the guileless mirth of nuns in a convent has reminded me of the gaiety of my parents during my early childhood.[1]

2. *Sobriety does imply calmness*—the calmness of clear and reasoned judgment and observance of fixed principles. To quote the famous Matthew Henry, who speaks wisely on the subject, 'To be sober-minded, is to make use of our reason, in reasoning with ourselves, and in communing with our own hearts; to employ those noble powers and capacities, by which we are distinguished from, and dignified above, the beasts, for those great ends for which we were endued with them, that we may not receive the grace of God in them in vain, but being rational creatures, may act rationally. You learned to talk when you were children; when will you learn to think?

[1] Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son*, 27.

to think seriously, to think to the purpose? Floating thoughts your heads are full of, foreign and impertinent ones; when will you be brought to close and fixed thoughts? to think with concern and application of the great things that belong to your everlasting peace and welfare? Learn to think not only of what is just before you, which strikes the senses, and affects the imagination, but of the causes, and consequences and reasons of things; to discover truths, compare them with one another, argue upon them, and apply them to yourselves, and to bring them to maturity; not to fasten upon that which *comes first* into your minds, but upon that which should come first, and which deserves to be first considered.'

'That which deserves to be first considered' —this is one of the cardinal points. There cannot be the required state of mind unless there be some great master principles, decidedly fixed in the very habit of thinking and feeling—principles applicable to almost all things in our interests and practice. We need not attempt to specify many of these. One is—that in all things and at all events God is to be obeyed. Another—that there is the essential distinction of holiness and sin in all conduct, both within the mind, and in external action, and that sin is absolutely a dreadful evil. Another—that that cannot be long right in which there is no self-denial. Another—— that that must not be done which must be repented of. Another—that the future should predominate over the present. For it is an essential principle of sobermindedness to judge of things viewed in their consequences. Everything tends and leads to something else, which later thing is caused, or at least affected, by the preceding. Our whole progressive existence is drawn out, so to speak, upon this succession of consequences. The consequence foreseen will determine, or help to determine, the quality of the thing present. The consequences (in the matters of human spirit and conduct) can be foreseen. They are both natural, and divinely declared. In the view of a thoughtful mind, the series stretches away into remote prospect. How far does it stretch on? Through all life, to death, to judgment, into eternity. The madness, then, of taking a thing just as what it is this hour, day, or even year!

Such ideas as these must be established firmly and operatively in the mind. But how can this be without much and frequent exercise of serious thought? Do such principles grow and establish themselves spontaneously? Alas! let anyone look into his own mind and see! Without much of serious thought, therefore, there cannot be 'sobermindedness.' And therefore, again, there cannot be this required state of mind, if principles are admitted, or practical determinations adopted, from mere impressions of fancy and feeling, perhaps from some casual situation into which a person is thrown; perhaps from the pleasing impression made by some new acquaintance, or a friend, while no account is taken of the whole comprehensive view of the matter. We must always guard against forming opinions on insufficient grounds. To do so is to become guilty of prejudice, which is disastrous to the developed religious life. It is quite true, of course, that there is a sense in which prejudice is an essential feature to a discriminating life. It is not intended that we should view all men and all things with the same complacency. There are men and things towards which we are bound to cherish condemnation itself. But even such condemnation does not mean that we are to be so swept off our feet by prejudice as to have no self-control and no discernment. At this present time there are strong tendencies towards such an excess of prejudice. Newspapers, periodicals and even volumes are written to inflame popular prejudice. Class antagonism, political partisanship and religious bigotry are very easily aroused, but they are not easily controlled. And the result is a series of hysterical antagonisms that are at the opposite pole from true Christian sobriety.

¶ A prejudice signifies a *prejudgment*, a judgment formed before, and therefore a judgment falsely so-called; an opinion adopted without inquiry or thought. The greater part of the opinions of the greater part of mankind are neither more nor less than such prejudgments. A mere handful of men have

so far done the entire thinking of the race. And the reason why people, generally speaking, do not think is this: they are satisfied with, even enamoured of, their prejudgments.[1]

3. *Sobriety is necessary to the Christian.*—All times show this. Truly the need of St. Peter's warning is writ large on the history of the Church. Of the power of Churchmen there is no doubt, nor of their zeal, their ardour, their self-devotion, their self-sacrifice; but we are bound to confess that their sobriety has not always been so conspicuous. This is the great lesson which comes to us from the past history of the Church. Men, by the exercise of the splendid virtues, won their way to power. They welcomed power as a means of carrying out their objects; but, just because these objects were so lofty, they failed in carefulness about the means which they used to achieve them. Their ardour would not brook hindrances, but feverishly strove to remove them by any means. They were in some cases hard, remorseless, cruel, oppressive, and all in the name of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Or, in other cases, enthusiasm degenerated into licence. The intoxication of hope overpowered the reason. Restraint was abandoned, the limits of human nature were disregarded, and wild disorder disgraced the Christian name.

¶ Nothing is more remarkable in history than the contrast between Christianity before and after the third century. That change embraces the whole conflict between a spiritual idea and material power, with Christianity itself taking the successive parts of hero and villain. . . .

It populated earth with demons in the name of him whose only demonology and theocracy was that the Kingdom of God is within you. It damned those populations of the world who, through ignorance, conviction, or indifference, did not agree with its opinions, and in the name of him whose social theories embraced the peace and brotherhood of men:—'A burning, scorching fire,' writes the saintly St. Cyprian, 'will for ever torment those who are condemned; there will be no respite or end to their torments. We shall, through eternity, contemplate in their agonies those who for a short time contemplated us in tortures, and for the brief pleasure which the barbarity of our persecutors took in feasting their eyes upon an inhuman spectacle, they will themselves be exposed in an eternal spectacle of agony.'

For the tolerance of its founder, it substituted a hierarchy of ecclesiastical dominion destined to expel freedom of thought from society for many centuries. It tried to proselytise mankind to the cause of the greatest of men who cared not for what men did, but what they were and what they might become in ever increasing warmth and intensity of life. It prescribed a regimen of taboos and prohibitions which put a halter on the soul at birth, led it to death and then turned it loose in a paddock of eternal bliss.[1]

Now, a true Christian sobriety would have avoided these evils, for one of its chief results is the production of a character, strong in individuality, which is many-sided and instinctively finds a point of sympathy with others. It differs from the mechanical power of a character formed by rigid discipline with a view to a particular end. Such characters impress us by their strength, but make us shudder by their narrowness; everything has been sacrificed to strength, and effectiveness is possible only by strict limitation of the sphere of action and of the outlook which prescribes it. Characters of this kind haunt us in the records of the past: they are horrible caricatures of a beautiful conception. The man has been clothed with a mask so that his real self should be undiscoverable, and he is reduced to be an agent of a great organization. True discipline leaves individuality strong and makes it effective; leaves natural gifts to exercise their sway and gives them a worthy end. It makes them sensitive and delicate to perceive right and wrong, powerful to penetrate through appearances, to remove the coarse covering of expediency or the flimsy veil of sentiment and see things as they really are in the sight of God.

But, necessary as sobriety is in the purely

[1] A. W. Momerie.

[1] H. J. Massingham, *People and Things*, 159.

religious aspect of life, it is no less necessary in the more secular. Lacking it, a man may form schemes ill-adapted to his character, his qualifications, and abilities—or his circumstances. For want of it, many have rushed into wild ill-concerted projects which have ended disastrously, or frustrated the most laudable designs. What important affair in life can that be, what pursuit, what business, that does not require, or will not be the better for, sound reason, solid principles, consideration of consequences, acknowledgment of the divine will?

¶ Take, for instance, the craze for money-getting. No one can deny the necessity for money. Money must be thought of every day, and it must be sought every day. Nowhere in Scripture is there the least tendency to underestimate the benefit of money. Indeed every intelligent mind knows that money has large power for good, that human enterprises cannot flourish without it, and that all benevolent institutions are dependent upon it. It is perfectly right that a man should desire money, for in many matters it is with money that he may hope to accomplish great help to the world. But it is the 'craze' for making money that is to be considered, as though the amount of money a man secured determined his success in life. This craze produces wrong ideals of character and conduct. Greed for money opens up opportunity for graft, for every kind of dishonesty and trickery.[1]

Or, again, take the craze for pleasure.

¶ A professor has said, 'There is no poison more dangerous than salt when taken in excess.' The trouble of our mad craze for pleasure is that in its excess it diverts time, strength and thought from other and more worthy things. The exhaustion of vitality through over-use of pleasure is seriously to be considered. There are men and women everywhere who in pleasure are burning out the fire of their life early, and they will have nothing left for their later years. The great point to keep in mind is that all this multiplication of mechanical comforts loses its meaning when it is used to complicate physical life, and to draw our attention off to physical enjoyments, whereas its value may be incalculable if it so simplifies and diminishes the necessary condition of physical needs as to leave the mind more and more free for spiritual development.[1]

4. *Sobriety is readily to be gained by the Christian.*—The means to do this are under his hand, if only he will use them. To quote Matthew Henry once more: 'He must espouse sober principles; for men are, as their principles are. In these void extremes, and in the less weighty matters of the law, keep the mean, that you may reserve your zeal for the great things of God, the things that belong to your everlasting peace. Take heed on the one hand of bigotry in the circumstantials of religion, and on the other hand of lukewarmness and indifference in the essentials of it. Let your principle be, that "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him," and therefore ought to be so of us; that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of men." By such principles as these keep up moderation and sobermindedness in your profession of religion, which will contribute much to the promoting of it in every thing else.'

A Christian will be able to do this in so far as he moulds his life on that of our continual Exemplar. The only perfect example of the sober mind is Jesus Christ. In every respect He carried Himself with poise. He was never swept off His feet by any unworthy excitement. His words, His principles, His deeds are those of a man of perfect sanity: they are wisdom, they are truth. In the hour of His passion, while all others lost self-control, He was balanced and calm. Living and dying, He is to us at once the embodiment of the sober mind and the inspiration to the sober mind. In Him was the peace that passeth understanding. As we secure His peace we secure the sober mind.

¶ To do a great and a good thing requires

[1] J. G. K. McClure, *Supreme Things*, 153.

[1] J. G. K. M'Clure, *Supreme Things*, 153.

a heart replete with the love of Christ and a head cooled by experience and knowledge of the world.'

The Christian Hope.

1 Pet. i. 13.—'Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober, and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.'

When the Holy Spirit revealed truth through inspired writers, He did no violence to the peculiarities of their individual temperaments; the distinct features of St. Paul's and St. Peter's and St. John's characters appear in their respective writings. St. Paul is the apostle of faith, St. John of love, and St. Peter of hope. And so the emphatic word in this First Epistle of Peter is 'hope.'

In the text the emphasis grammatically falls on the word 'hope,' for while the other verbs are participles, this is in the imperative. Literally translated, it would read thus: 'Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, being sober, hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' The text indicates the objects of Christian hope and their reliability.

1. What is the object set before the Christian hope? It is the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Few of us ever think of this. When we speak of the grace that is revealed we think of what is already manifested—of Golgotha with its cross, of Gethsemane with its agony, of the Garden with its rent tomb, of the ascending Christ and the descending Spirit. But in the third verse of this chapter the Apostle says, God 'hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.' St. Peter is speaking of something future, not grace already manifested, but an inheritance, reserved in heaven, ready to be revealed in the last time. And so here: 'The grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.'

When Christ was on earth His Divinity was rather hidden within the veil of His humanity; only now and then the glory of that Divinity shone forth, and then His disciples saw that He was the Son of God, and realized for a moment the greatness and the grandeur of His personality. When Jesus was here, He was in disguise. God was only feebly and faintly manifested in the flesh, which obscured the glory. But when Christ comes a second time, no longer to make a sin offering, but to bring full salvation unto His people, then will be the revelation of Jesus Christ. He will come like the King in His Glory, and with Him all the holy angels and saints; not to pursue a weary way from the manger to the cross, but as a King to reveal and unfold Himself; and that will be the revelation of Christ.

2. Now contrast the reality of Christian hopes with the illusiveness of worldly hopes.

(1) When Philip the Second of Spain transferred to the stately palace of the Escurial the body of his grandfather, he opened the sarcophagus to look on the remains of the stately Emperor of Germany. Everything was as perfect as when Charles the Fifth was buried in solemn state. All the features were clear, and the colour like life itself; but when the invisible touch of light and air came in contact with those remains, instantly there was a collapse that left nothing but dust on the bottom of the coffin! And human hopes are just as illusive. In the Christian objects of expectation there is nothing illusive. What God promises stands firm; a verity, a reality; there is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading. We do not see that inheritance yet. We are like a minor who has not yet entered on his estate, but who receives the revenue of it as the payments of interests come in; and so we have a foretaste of our future inheritance; the Spirit of God gives us an earnest of our possession, until the day of redemption. There is nothing illusive in the Divine promise.

[1] George Borrow, *Letters to the British and Foreign Bible Society.*

(2) We come to a limit in this world. We may have all the treasure of the world, and yet when death comes, from our relaxing grasp all these things disappear. We may have been applauded and admired by the world, but the applause of men will fade and faint on our ear as we reach the gates of the tomb. The glory of our possessions and our achievements will all pale and grow dim when we face the last great destroyer. But the point at which human hopes are utterly blasted is the point at which Christian expectations only arrive at their consummation.

¶ Charles the Fifth caused to be struck off, in the last part of his reign, a coin and an escutcheon. The coin contained the image of two pillars representing the pillars of Hercules at the Straits of Gibraltar, supposed in ancient times to be the boundary of the world, and over these two pillars was the simple Latin phrase 'Plus ultra'—'More beyond,' indicating that when you had gone to the limit of the old world there was more beyond the sea than all the possessions that you had surveyed. On the escutcheon he caused to be engraved two hemispheres, to indicate that, over both the old world and the new, the sceptre of his imperial dominion extended; that he was the sovereign of two worlds. This is to us a beautiful illustration of the Christian's confidence. When the worldly man comes to Life's Pillars of Hercules, beyond which he has no glorious possessions, he is compelled to write over the portals of the tomb, 'Ne plus ultra,' but the Christian may write over the gates of the grave, 'Plus ultra'—'more beyond'; what he was here is nothing to his inheritance there; and he may put on his escutcheon the two hemispheres, for godliness hath the promise of the world that now is and the world that is to come.[1]

Hope.

1 Pet. i. 13.—'Hope perfectly' (AV 'to the end').

Hope has been called 'the nerve, the backbone, of all true life.' To take hope from a man is to paralyze him morally; if he lives on in so dreary a condition, we think of him as surviving himself. It is needless to dwell on a point so clear; but simply to advert to it is to illustrate the affinity between the testimony of Nature and the teaching of that gospel which has canonized hope as the second of its principal virtues. The stress which Scripture lays on true religious hope is emphasized by the stern distinctness with which it brands the counterfeits, the hopes that are ignorant or presumptuous, and therefore delusive, and therefore destructive—like broken reeds which pierce the hand that leans on them. Such hopes, falsely so called, are ever reappearing in new forms in accordance with individual faults and weaknesses, or with the moral condition of the time.

1. Christian hope, as St. Peter tells us, is seated in God: it is, as it has been called, one of the triad of virtues specifically theological; it takes its stand on Divine revelation, it looks on to the attainment of Divine promises. It draws its life-blood from no mere surmise as to what is possible for humanity in the race at large or in the individual, but from the manifestation of Divine truth and goodness in the Incarnate, whom St. Paul, in one passage, calls 'our hope,' because our hope is grounded on Him and centred in Him. St. Paul, indeed, cannot think of hope without thinking of Christ; it is characteristic of him that the object of his 'earnest expectation and hope' should be the glorification of Christ in his body, whether by life or by death. Christian hope, being rooted in faith, is, like faith, vivid, positive, and definite. It is, as St. Peter calls it, 'living,' because it is a fruit of the resurrection-life of Jesus; it gazes with calm trustful eyes, onward and still onward, into a future literally boundless, as illuminated by the Person and the work of the one everlasting Redeemer; it is a 'hope of eternal life,' as based on Him. Because we trust Him, or in other words, the Father speaking through Him, therefore we cherish this radiant, vigorous expectation that He will be as good as His word, that His 'promises are Yea and Amen.' And this assurance, this 'helmet-like hope of salvation,' carries with it a confidence as to

[1] A. T. Pierson.

what man may obtain, and what he may become, in Christ, and therefore a determination not to be 'borne down and cowed by evil,' but to cultivate a religious courage, befitting those who know that they are on the side that ultimately must triumph.

¶ Watts' well-known picture of the frail figure on the eerie mountain-side, touching with weak hand the one unbroken string of a half-perished lyre, is surely not strong and vigorous enough to represent Christian hope—the stalwart, insistent, forceful thing that rushed like a strong wind into a diseased world, and turned the courses of thought, and religion, and literature, and social life, and focussed in clear outline the certainties of the world beyond the grave. No! that must represent mere natural heathen hope, such as it is, bereft of its vigour and assurance, yet still hoping on, as we say, 'against hope.' The hope that conquered the world stands with firm feet, she looks not down, but up, and afar down the vistas of continuous progress, and she holds the anchor strong and steadfast, that enters within the veil.[1]

2. A hope which is thus essentially religious, thus Christian from the root upwards, and impossible except on the terms of Christian belief, is strong enough to face all facts, even such as are unwelcome or austere. The Apostle of hope will not let his readers dwell in a fool's paradise; he reminds them that they are strangers and pilgrims; he speaks of manifold trials as present, of fiery trials as imminent; and, seven times at least, of 'sufferings' to be faced and borne by servants of the Crucified, expressly on the score of their faith. Life must, after all, be taken seriously; the hope which is a Christian's privilege involves a wakeful collectedness of mind. When trial comes, we are not to say, 'It is more than we bargained for,' but rather, 'We were duly forewarned.' Certainly there will be temptations to unhopefulness; there must be the discipline of hopes deferred, of successes marred, of apparent defeats and disappointments, of much that might tempt impatience to despair. A hope thus trained, while resting on august realities, is strong because it is not fanciful. It has realized the conditions of Christian life as an uphill march, a long and arduous campaign. It can afford to take full account of the gravest requirements of His service who bids no one follow save where He Himself has trod. It does not dream of being exempt from anxieties, but it 'casts' the whole weight of them on 'the strong hand' of that good Father who has proved so well how much He 'careth for us.'

Christian hopefulness is not the shallow optimism founded on illusion, but the tranquil and assured confidence which is strong enough to face all the facts of life (including the spiritual facts) and to take account of them. It moves about not in a make-believe, but in a real world. It thinks not with a dull, narcotized mind, but with a clear and healthy mind. It gazes forth on things not with bleared and distorting eyes, but with steady, healthy vision. It sees all the poverty, pain, misery, sin and confusion of the world, deplores the existence of tyranny and the fact that men are willing to endure it; is enraged by the sight of injustice and cruelty and folly; considers the frightful imbecility of war; groans with the groaning and travailing creation, and still hopes. 'Wherefore, girding up the loins of your mind, be sober (sadly sober, if you must), and hope.'

¶ Among the stations in the Canadian lighthouse service is one upon the little island of Damien. The force consists of four people—the lighthouse keeper, his wife, and two assistants. One day (a good many years ago now) the three men went out on the ice. They never returned. Before the woman's eyes they were engulfed in the ice-floes. Months after, when spring came, the supply ship reached the island with supplies for four persons. The boat's crew were met by the woman only. The skipper was amazed at her story. 'How did you get through the winter?' he asked. 'I don't know,' she answered, 'I only know I kept the lamp burning.' The lamp of Christian hope must burn steadily, whatever circumstances may be. Says Mr. Chesterton, paradoxically, of course, but strongly and well, 'Hope is the power of being cheerful in

[1] W. J. Ferrar, in *The Commonwealth*, August 1922.

circumstances that we know to be desperate. It is true that there is a state of hope which belongs to bright prospects and the morning; but that is not the virtue of hope. The virtue of hope exists only in the earthquake and eclipse. . . . As long as matters are really hopeful, hope is a mere flattery or platitude. It is only when things are hopeless that it begins to be a strength at all.'[1]

Perfect Hope.

1 Pet. i. 13.—'Hope perfectly' (RV).

1. That means hope *wisely*. It corrects that sort of false hoping which is as dangerous as timidity itself to the soul's life. We know what it is, in the affairs of this life, to hope, not reasonably, but on a principle of venturing and hazarding all things. There is the man who is playing the fool with his life, who is daily risking health and fortune and character in every kind of reckless or riotous living, yet hoping all the time that some miracle of chance—perhaps he even dares to say of Providence—will rescue him again and again from the natural consequences of his own conduct. There is the man who is making no provision whatever for the eternal future—who never prays one earnest prayer to the God of life and death for pardon and grace—yet hopes that something will happen before he dies to turn him into the very opposite of all that he is, so that he may die the death of the righteous, and awake to the enjoyment of a kind of life the exact opposite, in every respect, of all that till that moment he has regarded as happiness. There is the man who looks upon a world spoilt and ruined by sin, who reads every day the most horrible details of agonies incurred by the letting loose upon earth of every demon of lust and crime—yet idly hopes that nothing will come of it, in the long run, but what one breath of silly wishing may reverse and undo in a moment of time or a moment of eternity. Therefore, when St. Peter wrote that word 'perfectly' he may be supposed to have meant, first of all, Hope wisely—banishing, as it were, from the very precincts of the precept all that hoping which is instead of effort, against reason, and at variance with every principle of sobriety and good sense.

2. But when St. Peter writes, 'Hope perfectly,' he means above all things, to judge by the context, Hope *definitely*, on the ground of a Divine revelation involving three things—a past, a present, and a future.

(1) The precept of hope rests upon a basis of fact. God 'begat us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' St. Paul writes more briefly but in the same tone—'Jesus Christ who is our hope.' And where else can hope find any rest for the sole of her foot on an earth so disorganized, so out of course, so dark with storm-clouds of wrath, as this which God has given to the children of men? We are not to disparage the mercies and blessings that hover around most lives. But as for hope—if that were all—with reference to an undoing of the thing done, and a remaking of the thing spoilt, and a restamping of the defaced image and superscription upon the coin of humanity itself, what warrant, what beyond a mere guess or a mere peradventure, could hope have found, without that which St. Peter here calls a Divine regeneration—in other words, a Divine intervention and interposition definitely designed to make all things new.

(2) But St. Peter says, further, that there is a definite footing for hope also in the present. He speaks of those who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed. It is an appeal to the experience of his readers. They know, he says, the thing spoken of, and therefore to hope perfectly is, for them, to hope rationally. It is but to believe that the life which is now shall live on, that the power which is at work now shall work on, that the only use and aim of this present Divine dealing shall not be baffled but realized. There is a basis of fact in the present, as in the past, for hope to stand upon, when she looks forward and reaches forth into an invisible heaven.

[1] P. Martin.

¶ Have you ever held an acorn in your hand and thought of what it would become if planted and protected? A giant oak is wrapped up in that tiny seed, and in the oak, as a hundred years pass over it, ten thousand other acorns, each a potential forest. It is a poor illustration of the illimitable hopes wrapped up in the grace of God as Christ is more and more revealed to mankind.[1]

(3) Thus the past and the present link themselves with the future, and St. Peter can add, 'Hope perfectly for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.' The original is stronger and more expressive: 'the grace that is being brought to you.' For already the forces are at work which shall 'bring.' Everything is working towards, working up to, yea working out, that consummation which waits but for the unveiling, that He may be seen as He is, of Jesus Christ. To hope perfectly is to hope definitely. For the regeneration in the past is a conscious safe keeping in the present, and already the glory of the future Epiphany is in course of realization in every Divine dealing whether of Providence or of grace.

Keep heart, O comrades! God may be delayed
By evil, but He suffers no defeat,
Even as a chance rock in an upland brook
May change a river's course. And yet no rock,
No, nor the baffling mountains of the world
Can hold it from its destiny—the sea.

God is not foiled. The drift of the world-will
Is stronger than all wrong. Earth and her years,
Down joy's bright way and sorrow's long dark road
Are moving toward the purpose of the skies.

[1] P. Martin.

Obedience Old and New.

1 Pet. i. 14.—'As obedient children.'

The phrase which St. Peter uses, translated literally, as in the Revised Version, is 'children of obedience.' The form of expression is of course borrowed from the Hebrew, and to that extent may be called a Hebraism. But there is no reason to doubt that the figurative Hebrew form was deliberately chosen as better expressive of the Apostle's meaning than a descriptive and purely Greek phrase would have been. Those are called sons or children of an impersonal object who draw from it the impulses or principles which mould their lives from within, and who are, as it were, its visible representatives and exponents in their acts and speech.

The obedience to which St. Peter refers is that which is due to God from a member of the Christian covenant, consecrated with the blood of Christ. It answers to the earlier obedience involved in God's covenant with Israel, consecrated with the blood of animal sacrifices, as set forth in Exod. xxiv. 7, 8. Hearkening to God's voice and following its guidance is what St. Peter takes as the prime motive for one who has been admitted into the Christian covenant.

Now obedience is not in our day one of the more popular Christian graces or virtues. There are, it seems, fashions in morality as there are fashions in books and in dress, although, of course, moral truth itself, like all Christian truth, is, and must remain, ever the same. There have been days in the Church when men have been possessed of nothing short of a passion for putting themselves under rule, sometimes, it must be granted, not being sufficiently careful as to the sort of rule that they put themselves under. Those days have gone by, and, while we now have Church Temperance Societies and Church Purity Societies, with meetings and committees and secretaries, all devoted to the propagation and enforcement of these particular virtues, we do not as yet hear of a Church Obedience Society.

And yet obedience is as much a Christian excellence as temperance or purity, and the comparative indifference to its claims which is observable is a feature of the time for which it is well to endeavour to account.

1. The neglect into which obedience has fallen is apparently part of a larger neglect—that of the passive virtues generally. Although obedience has an active, sometimes a very active, side, it is, in the main, a passive excellence. The great difference between the moral teaching of Christ and that of the old pagan teachers of morality consists in the stress which our Lord lays on the passive virtues. In the old heathen world large classes of men had a sincere care for a certain sort of virtue, but they understood by virtue something active, productive, aggressive, robust. The passive virtues,—humility, self-denial, self-repression—of which so much is made in the Gospels, would have appeared to an average Roman gentleman very questionable virtues—the virtues of slaves or of degenerate and conquered races, rather than of men who, like himself and his fellows, could hold their heads high and direct the course of the world.

The fruits of the Spirit as enumerated by St. Paul—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness—would have seemed to such a strong-willed, shrewd old pagan ill-adapted to the practical business of life, which he would have held to consist in doing the best that could be done to assert and to enrich the position of his family or his race, and in keeping as many other people as possible in good order. And this old-world notion reappears in our own time whenever in classes of men, or in individuals, the faith and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ is losing its hold. As the soul loses touch with the great Master of love, humility, self-repression, obedience, it falls back on the old pagan idea of regulated self-assertion, and a virtue like that insisted on by St. Peter—childlike obedience—is apt to be very soon at a discount.

2. But besides the distaste for the passive virtues which is natural to ages and to races that have achieved material progress by cultivating a spirit of aggressive self-reliance, there is another characteristic of our time which makes obedience a more or less difficult virtue. We live in a democratic age—an age in which, whatever may be the external form of government in this or that country, the will of the great mass of the people goes much farther than it has ever gone before; and the tendency of events is to make democracy an even greater force in the future than it is at present.

Now in the growth of democracy an excellence like obedience is likely, from the nature of the case, to fall into disrepute. Obedience is said to be the virtue of older social conditions, such as accompanied feudalism or absolute monarchy—older conditions to which democracy has succeeded. It was natural, we are reminded, for arbitrary rulers to make much of a temper of mind which buttressed their power, but in a democratic age liberty takes the place of obedience. Liberty is the typical virtue of free, self-improved, self-governed man. Obedience, as a virtue, has had its day. We are reminded that we live in an age of liberty.

¶ One of our most venerated and farseeing citizens recently remarked that in his eighty years of active life, associated with some of the most stirring events in the commonwealth, he had never seen such an orgy of lawlessness as that through which we are living now. Startled into thoughtfulness by this assertion, I made some interesting discoveries: that I could not recall ever having preached a sermon on obedience; that I could not recall ever having heard a sermon on obedience; that when I searched volume after volume of modern addresses and sermons, I did not run upon any that dealt with respect for and obedience to authority. There were plenty on freedom, on the emancipation of the individual, on the outgrowing of old restraints, but few, if any, upon the necessity and glory of being mastered by what rightfully masters us. The impression began to sink in that our orgy of lawlessness is not an accident, nor merely a post-war psychological reaction, but that it is the natural fruitage of deep-rooted

tendencies in our thinking which have affected alike our religion and our law.[1]

3. Further, as the consequence of these tendencies—the neglect of the passive virtues among the energetic modern races of the West, and the steady growth of the democratic spirit—attention has been in modern times largely concentrated on those parts of Scripture, to the neglect of others, which lay stress upon the rights, as distinct from the duties, of a Christian—upon his freedom from the Jewish law, as distinct from his obligations to the external moral law; upon the liberty with which Christ has made him free, as distinct from that service which he owes to God, and which is itself perfect freedom. Liberty, rather than obedience, is the watchword of most of us—liberty to think as we please, rather than what St. Paul calls the obedience of faith; liberty to do and to be what we like, rather than the obedience of children which St. Peter would have us cultivate.

It is impossible to mistake the charm and power which attach to this word 'liberty.' There is something in our common human nature which at once responds to it. It appeals to sympathies that are universal and profound. Liberty is in one particular sense the excellence of man as man, that is to say, of man as a being endowed with a free will. As man compares himself with the inanimate creation, and with the lower animals around him, he feels, he knows, that he is that which they are not; that is to say, he is a will, he is a conscience, not strictly controlled by Nature or by instinct. The sense of this prerogative is the ground of human self-respect—the respect which each man owes to himself and that which he owes to others. To attempt to crush the exercise of this endowment of freedom is regarded as a crime against human nature, while the undertaking to strengthen its vigour and to enlarge its scope appeals to man's profound desire to make the best of that which is his central self. Hence the indefinite, the magic charm which always attends upon the word and the idea of liberty.

But when we use the word 'liberty' two different things are often intended. The liberty to choose between good and evil is one thing; the true moral liberty of man is another. Man's true liberty may be described as the unimpeded movement of his will towards God; but the only liberty with which many writers and speakers ever trouble themselves is liberty to choose between good and evil, as though we could not conceive of a liberty which did not include the choice of evil—as though the power of choosing evil were an integral element of real human liberty. Whatever we do, let us rid our minds of this miserable misconception; let us be sure that a man may be really free without being morally free to be a bad man.

¶ True liberty is secured when the will moves freely within its true element, which is moral good. Moral good is to the human will what the air is to the bird, what the water is to the fish. Bird and fish have freedom enough in their respective elements. Water is death to the bird as the air is death to the fish. A bird can sometimes drown itself; a fish can leap out of the water and die upon the bank; but the liberty of fish and bird alike is sufficiently complete without this added capacity for self-destruction. And so it is with man. Moral good, the moral law of God, is the element within which the human will may safely find room for its utmost capacity of healthy exercise and invigoration; and when a man takes it into his head that his freedom is incomplete if it does not include a licence to do wrong, he is in a fair way to precipitate himself out of his true vital element, to enslave and ruin his will by doing so.[1]

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character*, 107.

The Obedience of Children.

1 Pet. i. 14.—'As obedient children.'

THE obedience which St. Peter recommends is the obedience of children.

1. It is not the obedience of *slaves*—of slaves who are slaves against their will. The Kingdom of Heaven is not fashioned on the lines of an Oriental Court, in which a crowd of unwilling servitors tremble before a master

[1] H. P. Liddon.

whose word may at any moment bring to any one of them a sentence of death. There have been Christians who have understood the service of God in some such sense as this, but it is not the tendency or danger of our time. We should perhaps do better to remember that the use which a true Christian makes of his freedom is to become willingly a slave of Jesus Christ. This is St. Paul's favourite way of describing himself; 'Paul, a servant (it should be a *slave*) of Jesus Christ.' He means that he has freely surrendered himself—his soul, his body, his understanding, his affections, his will, his passions, his entire liberty—to the will, to the command, of Jesus Christ. But then this slavery is the highest expression of freedom, and it differs vitally from the involuntary slavery which has nothing to do with, though it may have at times been mistaken for, Christian obedience.

I give my life to God; 'twas never mine
To do with as I would; and if He ask
My all, my body, life, and soul, what then?
Shall I refuse, who had them all from Him?
What if He wants my home, my work, my friends,
Why that is nothing; He has asked for me,
And all these other things that fill my life
Are nothing worth when once my life has gone.
The gift He gives me is Himself; can I
Want anything beside? He asks of me
Myself; can I hold back?
Nay, Lord, I fling
Myself before Thy Throne, in utter joy
There prostrate lie, and, trembling, look and love.[1]

2. Nor is it the obedience of *mercenaries*. A true Christian does not serve God for the sake of what He can get from Him. He does not serve God only, or even chiefly, for the sake of gaining heaven or escaping hell. There have been Christians who have made this mistake, whose lives have been laid out so as to secure a future equivalent, or something more, for the efforts and sacrifices which have distinguished them here. This, too, is a mistake of past days rather than of our own. And yet, may not our service, after all, be in its spirit something mercenary? May we not be looking out for a reward here, or, at least, be disappointed if we do not receive one? a reward of bright thoughts, of buoyant hopes, of spiritual enjoyments, of exceptional consolations, perhaps of spiritual ecstasies, sustained assurance, unclouded love, joy, and peace in believing. And if these things are not granted, may we not be murmuring against the good Master, who has given us less than He has given to others who, as we may think, have served Him much less ardently than we?

Now, if God is to be served because He is what He is, infinitely perfect and lovable, it is not less true that a recompense does follow all Christian obedience. The picture in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, of the King sitting in judgment and making the eternal awards to the blessed and to the lost, is not an illusion. If the recompense is not the first motive of service, it is a motive which our Lord Himself has sanctioned. Indeed, in the last resort, obedience to God for His own sake and obedience for the sake of the reward which He gives so blend as not to be distinguishable from each other. Since God Himself is the only true and adequate reward of the human soul, He says to each true servant now, as He said to the patriarch, 'I will be thy exceeding great reward.' And yet it remains true that the obedience which keeps an eye only, or mainly, on what it will get is not in keeping with the highest temper of the Christian life.

¶ The feeble soul that may be lured to love and service by the promise of reward is unworthy to be enrolled in the regiment of Heaven. We needs must follow with assent the words in which the Saint [Teresa] disclaims with poignant ardour all thought of personal advantage, the desire of Heaven and the fear of Hell being alike blotted out in the burning radiance of devotion: 'Thou drawest me, my God. . . . Thy death agony draws me; Thy love draws me, so that, should there be no Heaven, I would love Thee. Were there no Hell, I would fear Thee.'[1]

[1] H. L. Hubbard, *Epiphanies*, 18.

[1] Lady Dilke, *The Book of the Spiritual Life*, 167.

3. St. Peter would have us render to God neither the obedience of mercenaries nor the obedience of slaves. His word is 'as obedient *children*.' No title of Christians should be more precious than that of 'children of God.' It belongs to us as being made members of Jesus Christ, God's true Son. St. Peter would have those to whom he writes remember what the title should suggest. That title of high distinction suggests a great deal—trust in and dependence upon God, unaffected reverence for God, tender love of God—but above all it suggests obedience. Every time that we say 'Our Father' at the beginning of the most authoritative and prevailing of all prayers, we bind ourselves to a life of obedience.

¶ For what good doth it to the Soul to know the Way to God, if it will not walk therein, but go on in a contrary Path? What good will it do the Soul to comfort itself with the Filiation of Christ, with His Passion and Death, and so flatter itself with the Hopes of getting the Patrimony thereby, if it will not enter into the Filial Birth, that it may be a true Child, born out of the Spirit of Christ, out of His Suffering, Death, and Resurrection? Surely the Tickling and Flattering itself with Christ's Merits without the true innate Childship, is Falsehood and a Lie, whosoever he be that teacheth it.[1]

Holiness.

1 Pet. i. 15, 16.—'Like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.'

1. What is holiness? In the Old Testament the word 'holiness' and all cognate words are almost invariably derived from a Hebrew word which means separation or setting apart of the thing described as sacred to the purposes of God alone. All the vessels of the ancient sanctuary were holy, but the thought of the word is that they were set apart to the Divine use and the Divine purpose. That is the first use of this word.

In the New Testament there is another word behind the word 'holiness'; a word which, from the standpoint of etymology, is not the same as the Hebrew word, although in use it means the same thing. The word of the New Testament is one which signifies something that is awful, full of awe, to the soul of the man who comes into contact with it. Holiness is a condition awe-inspiring. To leave the statement there, however, would be utterly to misinterpret the use of the word in the New Testament. Why are things which are holy awful? Why are things which have the quality we have translated holiness awe-inspiring? They are awful things because separated to God, belonging peculiarly and only to Him. That is the thought of the word wherever you find it in the New Testament. All that belonged to God inspired awe in the soul simply because it was His, separated to His use, set apart exclusively to Him.

Separation to God is, after all, what holiness means. The difference between the regenerate man and the unregenerate man is the difference between the man who belongs to God and the man who is at the disposal of any and every master who pays his price. The essential difference between the regenerate man and the unregenerate man is the difference between Buckingham Palace and, say, the Hotel Cecil. The Hotel Cecil, or any other hotel, is at the disposal of any man who can pay enough to hire it, but no one can hire Buckingham Palace. That is the dwelling-place of the king. Lust can hire the hotel, benevolence can hire the hotel for its annual dinner, anyone can hire the hotel who pays the price; but you cannot hire Buckingham Palace. No millionaire can hire it. Here are two men. One of them is an unregenerate man. The other is born anew. The unregenerate man can be bought. He will hire himself out to whatever pays the price he demands. Lust, avarice, drunkenness, debauchery, beneficence, philanthropy, anything that will give him his price, to it he will hand over his life. The regenerate man, if he understands the meaning of his regeneration, nothing can buy. He is the sanctuary, the temple, the dwelling-place of God. New Testament writers describe him as awe-inspiring, for such a man inspires other

[1] Jacob Behmen.

men with reverence and wonder as they recognize in him the peculiar, personal property of God.

2. And now, what does our English word 'holiness' mean? It may be traced to a simple Anglo-Saxon root, *halig*, which means 'whole,' 'complete.' From that root two words have come into common use, namely, 'health' and 'holiness.' In our differentiation in the use of words which have originally the same meaning, we have applied the word 'health' to things physical, and the word 'holiness' to things spiritual. We talk of a man as having a healthy body, or as being of a holy spirit, and we express exactly the same thing in differing spheres by the distinguishing adjectives which we use. We should do no violence to the intention if we spoke of a man with a holy body and a healthy spirit. In other words, what health is to the body, holiness is to the spirit; and, taken in its simplicity, holiness means health, wholeness, perfection in the spiritual sphere. It follows that there can be no holiness apart from life, for the very use of the word 'health' implies a pre-existing life principle. Given the life, then, holiness is simply that life maintained in health before God. This definition saves our word from abuse, for through it we see that holiness is not perfection of consummation, but only perfection of condition.

In winter-time we look upon a tree that is stripped of all its leaves. One spring morning we discover a bud full of promise, and we exclaim at its perfection. But what is the perfection of the bud? Is it the perfection of consummation? We should be sorry if that were so, if it remained a bud through all the months; and yet it has a perfection, the perfection of condition. It is healthy and sound, perfect in potentiality. The weeks pass on, and we visit the tree once again. A blossom has taken the place of the bud; and again we marvel at the perfection of its beauty. A little later we return, and the bud has now found its final perfection in the rich, ripe, luscious fruit upon the tree. It is perfect, not only as to condition, but as to consummation; not only in potentiality, but in realization. But the health, the wholeness, is no more perfect in the fruit than it was in the bud or the blossom. There is the same quality of holiness at every stage.

Look at that baby in its mother's arms. Is it perfect? Ask the mother! Is that the perfection of consummation? That mother's heart would break if the child remained at that stage as the years passed on, and there were no advance and no development; but it is perfect in condition, in health. The years pass on, the babe is no longer a babe, but a boy of sixteen or seventeen years of age. The light of health is upon his brow, the aspiration of young manhood beginning to burn in his eye. Is that perfection? Yes, in condition, in possibilities, but not in development. The perfection of consummation will come only with the years, and the burden, and passion, and testing fire; and yet there is a perfection all the way through.

And so we cannot have the perfection of consummation. We cannot yet apprehend all that is ours in Jesus Christ, but we can be holy. We can in our own spiritual life be all that is possible to us at the moment.

In one of his books Ruskin says, 'Some ten or twelve years ago, when I was first actively engaged in art teaching, a young Scotch student came up to London to put himself under me, having taken many prizes justly with respect to the qualities looked for by the judges in various schools of art. He worked under me very earnestly and patiently for a time, and I was able to praise his doings in what I thought very high terms. Nevertheless there always remained a look of mortification on his face after he had been praised, however unqualifiedly. At last he could hold no longer, but one day when I had been more than usually complimentary, turned to me with an anxious yet not unconfident expression and asked, 'Do you think, sir, that I shall ever draw as well as Turner?' I paused for a second or two, being much taken aback, and then answered, 'It is more likely you should be made emperor of all the Russias. There is a new emperor every fifteen or twenty years on an average, and by strange hap and fortunate cabal anybody might be made emperor. But

there is only one Turner in five hundred years, and God decides without any admission of auxiliary cabal what piece of clay his soul is to be put into.'

Come with your largest aspirations to the feet of Jesus Christ and you may count upon a very different answer. Shall I ever be strong in faith as Abraham and able to compass that which seems least possible to human thought? Shall I surmount pride and irritability and impatience, and rival Moses, the meekest man upon earth? Shall I break at last into rapt praise like Isaiah and be transported with visions rich in spiritual ecstasy and exalted hope? Shall I come to plead like Elijah and be judged worthy to enter into the very counsels of the Most High? Shall I rival the self-denial and heroism of Paul, or emulate the charity of the gentle and saintly John? Your aspiration may wing itself to yet higher spheres. 'I am the first-born amongst many brethren, and you shall be like Me.'

We must go up, my soul, we must go up,
For we have seen the unconquerable height,
The White Heart of all whiteness, bright
With so unbearable a light
That the poor dweller in the vale
Hides his face from It, awed and pale.

We must go up, my soul, we may not stay
With the soft beauties of the level day,
The colour and the pleasant warmth and
play.
We love but pass them, for we go
On, on and ever upward to that awful glow.

We must go up, my soul, we dare not flag
From perilous crag to crag,
We may not on the sheltering ledges lag.
Still fortified with Bread and Cup
We will go up, my soul, we will go up.

We must go up, my soul, for who would miss
For any joy the incomparable bliss?
For any love the Immortal Lover's kiss?
We have had glimpses of the Heaven to be
And felt the throbbing of its ecstasy.[1]

[1] Dorothy F. Gurney, *A Little Book of Quiet*, 43.

Why Holy?

1 Pet. i. 15.—'Like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living.'

1. Holiness is necessary for salvation. Without holiness we are not complete or perfect men. That which constitutes our true perfection and glory is the adornment of our soul with the holiness of God as a positive quality. We are not the sons of our earthly father merely because we are of the same flesh and blood, or have the same form and features, or the same physical peculiarities; we are truly sons when we have similar intellectual characteristics and moral dispositions to those of our parent. Blood relationship and physical likeness do not make a son of a man who is a prodigal—who has renounced his sonship, and is living contrary to the moral conditions of his parent's life. A picture is not esteemed for its canvas or its framework; for a painting is worthless which has only canvas and gilding to recommend it. We value a painting for the harmony of its colours, the taste and beauty of its combinations, and the striking and impressive likeness of the features portrayed. So the natural qualities of the soul will not exalt us when we are deficient in or devoid of moral qualities. It is not intellectual abilities or social virtues, valuable and important as these are, but moral purity and holiness, which are our true manhood.

¶ I recollect that when I was a student of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, the late Professor Fleming had been lecturing on 'Natural Theology,' and had quoted the distinction in the attributes of the Deity. He had not quoted Scripture, but a raw country student, who, if he had not shining ability, was deeply pious, went beyond his preceptor. While reading an essay called forth by the business of the class, he remarked, 'It is never said in the Bible by God, Be ye omnipotent, for I am omnipotent, or, Be ye omniscient, for I am omniscient; but it is said, Be ye holy, for I am holy.' This quotation produced a powerful impression on his fellow-students, for the Word of God is

quick and powerful everywhere. I have had my eye on that essayist ever since. He is now a useful and respected minister of the Gospel.[1]

2. Holiness enables us to do good in the highest sense of goodness. Healthy sap must circulate in the tree, otherwise it will not bear fruit. A man devoid of intellect cannot perform the higher functions of a man. For the same reason the moral derangement of our soul prevents us from doing good in the Divine Kingdom of God, and we may be a moral danger to ourselves or to others. Holiness is our moral life, enabling us to do good and to bring forth spiritual fruit. We live a morally useful life only when we live in God.

¶ The prayer of Socrates was, 'Grant me to be beautiful in the inner man'; that of Thomas à Kempis might be said to be, 'Grant me to be holy in the inner man'; and as the mirror *within* became clearer and ever clearer, he felt that the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus shone ever brighter from it and by it. He heard the voice saying, 'I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honour, without contention of arguments,' and he followed it. His cell became a 'little window into heaven.'[2]

3. Without holiness there is no happiness. True happiness is not the effect of freedom from restraint or of a free rollicking spirit, or of a thoughtless, easy mind, but is entirely dependent upon a certain moral disposition or temper. Holiness is the happiness as well as the perfection of the Divine nature; and so must holiness, as the moral disposition of our souls, be essential to our happiness for earth and for heaven.

¶ No sentiment is more untrue, and none if acted on more baneful, than that of the Latin poet who declared, 'The only way to be happy is to care for nothing much.' On the contrary, we must care for truth and righteousness with the whole force of our manhood. The offering of ourselves in soul and body for these is happiness beyond expression. Staleness and dullness hold our hearts when we shrink from moral decision. Then it is that we lack virility, and, being without purpose, trust in that expediency which leads to moral bankruptcy. Faithful devotion to principles can alone save us. Morality is too often considered restrictive. In truth it is creative, always conferring new powers, new visions, new attainments. It gives a man confidence, and enables him to confront the issues of life and death undismayed. For in recognizing moral distinction he lives in no fool's house, but in a world where, though the struggle between good and evil may try men to the uttermost, victory at the last must be with the good.[1]

[1] *The Life of Fergus Ferguson*, 179.
[2] D. Butler, *Thomas à Kempis*, 120.

The Example of God.

1 Pet. i. 16.—'Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.'

We often hear it alleged, as an argument against the Divinity of Christ, that a Divine Christ could be no example to a human being. Is it so? Here is St. Peter offering us the Living God as our example.

1. It is certainly impossible for us to conceive a character of more complete spiritual excellence than that which is set forth in the pages of the Old Testament, and epitomized in the winning and unblemished life of Jesus Christ, the express image of the Father. The long centuries of sacred history illustrate for us the high union of righteousness and compassion, truth and tenderness, equity and long-suffering, majesty and condescending grace; and the character of Jesus Christ focusses these attributes into a spotless splendour that holds us in a fascination to which awe and love alike contribute. We instinctively recognize that all perfection is gathered up here, and imagination itself cannot add another glory or attraction to the picture. All human ideals of spiritual grandeur are surpassed and eclipsed. The crown of supremacy belongs to God, not by an arbitrary coronation act, but by His own inherent fitness to wear it.

[1] *The Spirit of Man:* Essays from 'The Times,' ii. 84.

2. Now in the exercise of our natural gifts we are bound, as far as may be, to realize our own conception of the best. The thrill of a sensibility always cradles an obligation. The musician whose soul has been visited by dream-like melodies from other worlds is bound so to group his notes as to realize, for those to whom he sings, the mystic enchantments that have smitten his own soul with wonder. The painter to whose inner sense the subtle charm and secret of glowing sky, or flowered landscape, or fretting sea has made itself known is bound to suggest, so far as the play of colours will do it, the magnificent vision that has possessed his own imagination. All admirations have as their very core and essence the force of a vast moral constraint; and if God be the best of which we can think or reason or dream, if He has conquered all our moral admirations, if He is the loftiest pattern a quick and healthy and highly stimulated conscience can conceive, we are bound to copy Him.

¶ Perfection is not in our power, yet we may aspire to nothing short of it. 'We needs must love the highest when we see it.' . . . . . Christianity is more insistent than any other faith on the fact that men must strive after perfection. It scorns compromise with men's poor powers, but bids them remember the Divine perfection and seek to attain it in themselves. This is the cause of its insistence on the Perfect Manhood of Christ, and our duty to make Him the pattern of our lives. It might have been supposed that confronted by this ideal men would recognize the impossibility of attaining it, and sink into sheer hopelessness. Certainly they are not spared the sense of failure. Indeed, this is most apparent in those who strive most earnestly to achieve success. Hence comes that note of penitence in the lives of the saints, so incomprehensible to others, and yet so inevitable in men who see and love the ideal and strive to attain it. Hence comes the startling poignancy of the true Christian's confession of sin. He knows what he is called to be, what he might be, and comparing it with what he is bewails his failure.

But in this consciousness of so great a disparity between attainment and ideal there is the secret of an ever greater successor. It braces a man to a more strenuous self-discipline, teaches him a wiser caution, incites him to new efforts to that ideal which becomes all the clearer and more attractive even when it seems most beyond his range. He knows that as long as life lasts he must fall short of his aims, and yet there abides in the depths of his soul the vision he cannot forsake, which attracts, comforts, and strengthens even when it condemns. One thing he may not do. He may not be content with anything less than the ideal.[1]

¶ My great object was to be like Him, to imitate Him as far as He could be imitated.[2]

3. But observe that when we affirm the obligation to copy we imply some underlying unity of life. Obligation to conform to a specific pattern is dissolved by radical dissimilarity of structure, organization, faculty. The cedar of Lebanon cannot expect the hyssop which is on the wall to rival the girth of its own trunk, or the strength and gloomy grandeur of its own snowladen arms. It would be the pitch of all unreason if the golden eagle swooping through the tracks of the highest clouds were to say to the wind-driven butterfly, 'Chase our strong kindred in their flight to the gates of the sun.' It would have been a cruel absurdity if some one had stepped up to Caliban, or to Quasimodo, the dwarf in Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame* who impersonates all ugliness, and had said, 'Be Apollo; he is the one mould of physical perfection into which you must try and compress yourself.' When you say, 'Copy here; carry out there in harmony with the accepted standard,' you imply some kind of organic fitness to fulfil the counsel.

God's nature is the archetype of ours. What does it mean when it is said we are 'made in God's image' and quickened to life with God's breath but that God has put within us the rudiments of His own holiness? The power to grow like God is implanted in

[1] *The Spirit of Man:* Essays from 'The Times,' ii. 69.
[2] David Livingstone.

man at the very beginning. There is a long-buried seed of spiritual excellence in him old as his dim origins, which the processes of grace are destined to awaken and mature and perfectly fructify.

To give us further assurance on the subject we are not only reminded of that image whose faint outlines and affinities we still bear, but we are told that this high and holy One has made Himself in our image. The correspondences are guaranteed from two standpoints. He has lived out His perfect life in an environment that is one with our own. In the person of His spotless and Eternal Son, God has bowed Himself to the most abject conditions of our life, challenging our temptations, engaging the corrupt and hostile forces that confront us, and giving us a vision of what we are charged to copy, notwithstanding the strain of fierce and varied temptations. In an age more evil than our own He has illustrated the life that is perfect and Divine, and proved earthly holiness possible by maintaining in the face of all hostile and unkindly influences, the unblemished holiness of heaven.

¶ One Figure there is in history which has embodied for those who have examined it most carefully the ideal of human perfection. Born among a people who beyond all others are marked by racial peculiarities, living at a time when all the special limitations of that race seemed most marked, fashioned, it would seem, by local conditions, He yet manifests human life in its completeness. The perfect proportion of His character, while it transcends our standards, offers us the pattern of the ideal manhood. What is His secret? He was inspired by one great purpose. He came to do the will of the Father who sent Him. This was the law of His life, and as He followed it He acquired through the suffering and work which are common to human experience the fullness of His perfected character. Moral perfection is seen to be achieved in the obedience to this law of consistency—not consistency to opinion, however well founded, nor to human law, however just, but to those realities of the spirit which are the most potent factors in the shaping of human character. In obedience to the Divine Will men are transformed at last into the Divine likeness.[1]

Accessibility and Energy.

1 Pet. i. 16.—'Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.'

Is it impossible? It is possible, and it is certain, if we are made in the image of God, and if we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us. For then, not only do we possess an innate capability of becoming like God, but the self-same energy that makes God holy dwells in us and blends itself with our life. The very motive which determines God's eternal and unspotted life of blessedness comes to infix itself in us. The power of God's personal holiness, with all its magnificent achievements, lends itself to us for our perfecting.

Two things are implied in this injunction—accessibility, and indwelling energy.

1. That which is distant and intangible can never be a legitimate example for our imitation. A man might be born among the Pitcairn islanders, with the genius of a Giotto, but he would never rise to the level of a sign-painter unless he could be brought into more stimulating artistic associations than he would find in that island prison. He must come to Europe and see the masterpieces in Munich and Venice and London before he can vie with the princely colourists of the West. It is useless telling some peasant singer of a secluded village that she must produce her notes after the methods inculcated in the academies of Paris and Vienna. Protégé and master must be brought into personal relation with each other by the cheque of some generous patron. It is idle counsel to tell a musical instrument maker to copy the varnishes and wood-craft of the matchless makers of Cremona. Those unrivalled makers have been in their graves for centuries, and have taken their secrets with them. There seems little chance of imitation in such cases without a resurrection of the great craftsmen themselves. And it is useless telling men to copy God if the model is so far off that they cannot apprehend His presence

[1] *The Spirit of Man:* Essays from 'The Times,' ii. 104.

or seize the qualities of His living attributes. God comes very near to every man who wants to copy His personal perfection, and the reason He seems far off from some is that they have never been inspired with the desire to emulate His character. He is a model who lends Himself to the most intimate handling of reverential natures, and to the closest study of all who love Him and desire to conform themselves to His spiritual similitude.

2. But God not only makes Himself accessible to us, and opens up to our discernment the deepest secret of His life; He comes to dwell within us and inform our natures with His hourly inspirations. And if God be in us, the imitation of God is not an extravagant or fantastic hope.

¶ It is said that the finest rose-tree in the world is one in Holland which a few years ago had six thousand flowers in bloom at the same time. The poor briar in the hedgerow might well despair of rivalling that wonderful rose-tree and attaining world-wide distinction. But if some kindly hand could transplant it to a choicer soil and give it nurture of needful skill, and if some bud from that wonderful Dutch tree could be grafted into its central fibres, the poor despised growth of the hedgerow might hope one day to bear its thousand blooms and be the wonder of a nation. And poor in all high moral and spiritual qualities as we ourselves may be, grudging in sacrifice, ignoble in spirit, grovelling in motive, yet if God infix His own life within us no limit can be put to our spiritual development. With Christ's engrafted life transfusing itself through the hidden channels of our nature, we may present to the world characters full of uncommon fragrance and rich in manifold spiritual splendours. The imitation of God becomes possible to us because of our union with Christ, God's perfect image, and our very participation in the deepest springs of His wonderful life.[1]

O Thou unknown, inscrutable Divine!
I deem that I am Thine, and Thou art mine;
And though I may not gaze into Thy face,
I feel that all are clasped in Thine embrace.
The Christ is with us, and He points to Thee:
When we have grown into Him we shall see;
Behold the Father in the perfect Son,
And feel, with Him, Thy holy will be done![1]

These are stupendous truths. St. Peter knew them to be stupendous, and he prepared for their utterance by some other affirmations. There is a solemn character in this Epistle which becomes at times even oppressive. He speaks of a living hope into which he had been begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; of the diligent inquiry and search of the prophets into a testimony which they felt to reach far beyond their understanding; of angels stooping down to look into the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. He speaks—this plain man, so far removed from the reveries and raptures of the Apostle Paul—he speaks of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him. Into what an amazing world we are brought! Let us remember that St. Peter had seen Christ after His resurrection. Suppose we had seen Him in like manner—seen Him die, seen Him buried, been a witness of His resurrection. Try to imagine the impression on us of this immense and awful fact. Would it not bear the weight of all the personal appeals which are based upon it; be simply consistent with the whole series of transcendent doctrines with which it is associated? What St. Peter says he saw we say we believe. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we may believe that, since God is holy, we too may be holy. And we shall be able to listen to the admonition—Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind; be watchful to the end, and set your hope on the grace that is brought to you in the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[1] T. G. Selby.

[1] R. B. W. Noel.

Fear.

1 Pet. i. 17.—'Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.'

It is hardly possible to speak of the good or evil of fear without falling into contradictions. There is a fear which is the reverence of a child for its father, of a creature for its creator; and this fear, which does not degrade but rather uplifts, is the beginning of wisdom. There is a servile fear which may be salutary in a low spiritual state, but which contains nothing ennobling, and is cast out by the love to which God's children are called.

The Christian's walk is a fine swinging step, born of hope and happy confidence. To pass the time in fear is not to move in paralysing dread. Nor is it to be the victim of a paralysing particularity which converts every trifle into a thorn, and makes the way of life a via dolorosa of countless irritations. The Christian is neither a faddist nor a slave. To pass the time in fear is just to watch against indifference, to be alert against an insidious thoughtlessness, to be spiritually awake and to miss no chance of heightening the purity of our souls by all the ministries of holy fellowships, and by a ready obedience to the Master's will.

1. Fear is frequently spoken of in the Old Testament. There is a passage in the Psalms which might be taken as a text for this whole Epistle of St. Peter. It is at the end of the 111th Psalm, in which David has been giving most high praise and glory to God for His marvellous and distinguishing mercy towards His own chosen and peculiar people. 'He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant. He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen. . . . He sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant for ever.' This is the Psalmist's account of the high privileges and honours given to those whom God chooses to be His own people. But observe how he follows it up: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do thereafter: the praise of it endureth for ever.' As much as to say, that, great and glorious as the mercies are which God has provided for His own elect people, they are not such as ought for a moment to set us free from that godly fear, that religious and awful sense of God's unspeakable presence, which is the beginning, the head and the crown, of all spiritual wisdom. In a word, the love and fear of God will grow up together in a religious and thoughtful heart, as it comes to know more of Him as the greatest and best of fathers.

¶ Among the children of God, while there is always that fearful and bowed apprehension of His majesty, and that sacred dread of all offence to Him, which is called the Fear of God, yet of real and essential fear there is not any, but clinging of confidence to Him as their Rock, Fortress, and Deliverer; and perfect love, and casting out of fear; so that it is not possible that, while the mind is rightly bent on Him, there should be dread of anything either earthly or supernatural; and the more dreadful seems the height of His majesty, the less fear they feel that dwell in the shadow of it ('Of whom shall I be afraid?'), so that they are as David was, 'devoted to His fear.'[1]

2. In the Christians of the Bible fear is a great motive, but it is not a dejecting influence; rather is it an active, stimulating principle, pushing them even to exertion for others. It is a strengthening and fortifying feeling. The whole powerful missionary spirit of the early Christians was conceived in fear. In fear the Apostles preached, and in fear their preaching was heard, in fear men converted, and in fear they were converted. The sins of the world, their dreadful nature, the blackness of darkness in which lost mankind was sinking, made the Apostle tremble; he saw with much vividness the gulf that was ready to receive mankind. He preached the gospel in anxious haste to rescue any of these lost souls; he was in fear lest he should miss any soul within his reach, as though throwing a momentous chance away. The whole undertaking to convert the world was built upon that foundation.

[1] Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, ii. § 27.

The impulse that gave it life and momentum sprang from that. It would not have been the active thing it was without fear as its great stimulus. The Apostles were answerable for every breath they drew, every pulse that beat in them; all must go to further the gospel.

3. Their fear was of a God that judges. Did their fear of God, then, make them miss the comfort of His Fatherhood? Quite the opposite. St. Peter makes the fear rest upon His Fatherhood: 'If ye call on him as father, pass the time of your sojourning in fear.' God claims fear as a Father—reverence, no doubt, mainly—honour, awe in the realizing of His infinitude; but something more than these, something else. For God as a Father judgeth. Fatherhood does not mean the laying aside of rule. Many have a confusion of ideas here. They think that God as a King may judge—as a King does judge; but a Father—that is something quite different. 'When you call God Father,' they say, 'you do not need to think any more of judgment. That is all past and gone for you.' As if God would be a King now and a Father again by turns. God is always a Father, the word King is but a figure compared with this. Among men it is only one of many names by which rulers are designated, and in itself it expresses shifting ideas. There is no fixedness or depth in it. But the word Father is something real, fixed, invariable. Fatherhood is the very heart of God. He is essentially and eternally a Father, and a Father who judgeth. Did He not judge and condemn sin, He could be no true Father. Love must hate sin and show its hatred. Father is no weak, soft, indulgent word. It means love, and because it means love it means right, and undying opposition to evil. The Father judgeth without respect of persons. There is no other Father than the Father who judgeth. All other ideas of the Fatherhood of God are a vain and pernicious dream.

What a terrible thing it is to be judged by a Father whom you love. Would you think it a more terrible thing to be judged by a King than a Father? 'King' is a cold distant word. The judgment of a King does not feel half so searching and painful as that of a Father. I could perhaps steel myself against the judgment of a King, but the judgment of a Father breaks me down. I am obliged to acquiesce in His judgment of me. It is dreadful to feel that even love, that even a Father's love, condemns me.

¶ What does the term 'Father' immediately suggest to me? Good nature or holiness; laxity or righteousness; a hearthstone or a great white throne? The primary element in my conception will determine the quality of my religious life. If the holiness of Fatherhood be minimized or obscured, every other attribute will be impoverished. Denude your conception of holiness, and it is like withdrawing the ozone from the invigorating air, or abstracting the freshening salt from the healthy sea. Suppress or ignore the element of holiness, and think of the Father as affectionate, and the love that you attribute to Him will be only as a close and enervating air. Love without holiness is deoxygenated, and its ministry is that of an opiate or narcotic. Pity without holiness is a bloodless sentiment destitute of all healing efficiency. Forgiveness without holiness is the granting of a cheap and superficial excuse, in which there is nothing of the saving strength of sacrifice. Begin with pity or forgiveness, or forbearance or gentleness, and you have dispositions without dynamics, poor limp things which afford no resource for the uplifting and salvation of the race. But begin with holiness, and you put a dynamic into every disposition which makes it an engine of spiritual health. Forgiveness with holiness behind it is a medicated sentiment, fraught with healing and bracing ministry. Gentleness with holiness behind it touches the aches and sores of the world with the firm and delicate hand of a discerning and experienced nurse. Exalt the element of holiness, and you enrich your entire conception of the Fatherhood of God.[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett.

The Means of Redemption.

1 Pet. i. 18.—'Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, but with precious blood.'

THERE is no expression in the New Testament applied to the Saviour's work for mankind that has taken firmer hold on the heart of Christendom than that which speaks of it as 'redemption.' 'The Redeemer' is one of the commonest titles ascribed to Christ, and no aspect of His work is more familiar than that in which it is regarded as a redeeming or ransoming of mankind from the power of Satan. Such language is common throughout the New Testament from the Gospels to the Apocalypse. We meet with it even before the Saviour's birth. The earliest occurrence of the phrase is in the Song of Zacharias, which begins with a benediction of the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed—or wrought redemption for—His people. Our Lord Himself is represented as using the same kind of language, for, as reported by St. Matthew and St. Mark, He says quite definitely that He came to give His life a ransom for many. St. Paul, in his speeches and Epistles, has constant allusions in varied expressions to the same conception. In addressing the Ephesian Elders at Miletus, he charges them to feed the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood. Writing to the Corinthians, He reminds them more than once that they are not their own, for they are bought with a price. Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, redemption through His blood, redemption from the curse of the law—these are phrases which are often on his lips; and, in close dependence on the words of our Saviour Himself, he tells Timothy that the one Mediator between God and man gave Himself a ransom for all. So St. Peter tells his converts that they were redeemed, 'not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, but with precious blood,' even the blood of Christ; and in his Second Epistle he mourns over the coming of false teachers who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them; while in the Apocalypse, when the Seer in Patmos is granted his vision of the Lamb as it had been slain, he hears the four and twenty Elders, the representatives of the Church from the beginning to the end of time, sing a new song before the throne, saying, 'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed (or bought) us to God by thy blood.'

In our text the emphasis is on the means of our redemption. How were we redeemed?

1. 'Not with corruptible things, with silver or gold.' There are some things, then,—let it be repeated because we are so apt to forget it—that silver and gold cannot do. There is a great scene in *The Heart of Midlothian* after Effie Deans has sinned her sin and has been taken prisoner for her crime. The little home is plunged into a horror of grief and shame, and the Laird of Dumbiedykes draws out his purse, laden with golden guineas, with the vague thought that money can do anything, 'Jeannie woman! its sad work, but siller will help it.' 'Davie, winna siller do't?' But there are some tragedies which silver and gold cannot mend. If a heart is aching, silver and gold cannot soothe it. If the world needs raising, silver and gold cannot lift it. It takes love. It takes 'Love Divine' all love excelling,

> for by that power alone
> Can they be saved, the Sacramental Cup
> Of suffering Love must overflow and spill
> Its splendour out in sacrifice, for Love
> Alone redeems.[1]

2. 'But with precious blood.' This precious blood is the blood of Christ. And the blood of Christ is the love of Christ. 'The blood of Christ,' says Ignatius of Antioch, one of the earliest Christian Fathers, and a disciple and companion of the Apostle John, 'the blood of Christ is love and charity.' With this agrees the language of the New Testament as to the essential characteristic of God and of Christ. Love, unselfish love, is there spoken of again and again as the fundamental essence of the

[1] G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, *Songs of Faith and Doubt*, 65.

highest life of God; and it is also evident on the face of the Gospels that it is the fundamental motive and characteristic of the life and death of Christ. It is this 'love stronger than death,' this love manifesting itself in death, this love willing to spend itself for others, that is the blood of the life in which God is well pleased. Not the pain or torture of the Cross—for that was alike odious to God and useless to man—but the love, the self-devotion, the generosity, the magnanimity, the forgiveness, the toleration, the compassion of which that blood was the expression, and of which that life and death were the fulfilment.

¶ 'What is the blood of Christ?' asked Livingstone of his own solitary soul in the last months of his African wanderings. 'It is Himself. It is the inherent and everlasting mercy of God made apparent to human eyes and ears. The everlasting love was disclosed by our Lord's life and death. It showed that God forgives, because He loves to forgive.'

Redemption From a Way of Life.

1 Pet. i. 18.—'Knowing that ye were redeemed from your vain manner of life (AV 'conversation') handed down from your fathers.'

The Apostle reminds his readers that they had been set free from a way of living, without aim and without result, which they had accepted from their fathers, who themselves had lived this useless life. This description of their former life is unhappily true of the mass of mankind in all ages. They toil, but without worthy result. And the word 'ransom' implies that this mode of life was a bondage from which they could not save themselves. But the Apostle says that deliverance has been effected, and that it has been costly. Its price has been, not silver or even gold, but precious blood, blood in some respects like that of the animals slain in sacrifice, but more costly, namely, the blood of Christ. The writer thus re-echoes and expounds the words of Christ in Matt. xx. 28, words which possibly he may have heard from the Master's own lips.

1. They were redeemed from aimless living: 'ye know that ye were redeemed from your vain manner of life.' Now, whether our views of the Atonement are orthodox or otherwise, we shall certainly not grudge to anyone his redemption from vanity of living. Vanity! It is a dreary word: it moans like a winter wind through the Book of Ecclesiastes, the dirge of hope, the knell of effort—'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' And the thing is as dreary as the word—a life without purpose, a driftwood life floating with the stream, or at best a bewildered life without anything to turn it from a problem into an enterprise.

There are multitudes of lives in the modern as in the ancient world which need nothing quite so much as the redemption which is so defined, to be redeemed from their own emptiness, to have their aimlessness changed into purpose and their futility into accomplishment. If that could be done for them, it would be their Red Sea crossing, their passage from Egypt to the Land of Promise.

> Most men eddy about
> Here and there—eat and drink,
> Chatter and love and hate,
> Gather and squander, are raised
> Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,
> Striving blindly, achieving
> Nothing; and then they die—
> Perish—and no one asks
> Who or what they have been,
> More than he asks what waves,
> In the moonlit solitudes mild
> Of the midmost ocean, have swell'd,
> Foam'd for a moment, and gone.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And there are some whom a thirst
> Ardent, unquenchable, fires
> Not with the crowd to be spent,
> Not without aim to go round
> In an eddy of purposeless dust.[1]

2. But the ransom is also from the dead hand: 'received by tradition from your (dead) fathers.' They had been redeemed not only from aimlessness but from traditionalism, from conventionality, from the power of the dead hand. Again the appeal is to

[1] Matthew Arnold.

experience: they knew this was so. Traditions which had once lain like fetters upon their souls had been broken and cast aside; authorities which had once been terrifying had now lost all their terror, and, like the bird out of the snare of the fowler, their souls had escaped.

Few things are more wonderful about the life of the New Testament Church than its moral originality. It was a life which had conquered tradition, and so conquered a world which entrenched itself in tradition. It was a life which, having long worshipped the past and bowed to its judgment, had suddenly become responsible to a living Saviour and submissive to the verdict of a judgment to come. There are such souls even yet in a convention-ridden world; we must honour their quiet heroism. We must go deeper: we must praise and honour the God who has wrought this wonder in them. For it is not only a victory, it is a redemption. God is in it, giving the call, and pointing the way, lest His chosen remain

> With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,
> Tame in earth's paddock as her prize.

¶ What was a living experience to our fathers may become a dead fetish to us. What was their conviction may become our convention. There can be no progress if we are always striving to see life through the eyes of our grandfathers—that way madness lies. The most interesting thing in the life of John Wesley is to see how a man to whom convention was so precious a thing, slowly, but surely, releases himself from its deadening influence. In Georgia, although he may have been unconscious of it, he steps down into the arena to wrestle with it. It was a long struggle. The glowing experience in Aldergate Street did not give this foe its *coup de grâce*. For a time he was imprisoned by the convention that a soul could not be converted outside a church, but at Bristol he 'submitted to become more vile,' and preached to the crowds in the open air. One by one he masters the tyranny of conventions, and the claims of Christ and the spiritual needs of men and women become his absolute and only test of action. He was not free-born, but with a great price he obtained his freedom. There, however, comes a point in his life when the claims of convention could not contend with him against the claims of life, or life's needs. Taste, training, prejudice, were all burned away by the fires of Divine love, and we see him in his greatest glory—as free, but 'not using his freedom for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the bond servant of God.' There is no question that we ought to ask ourselves more carefully than this: 'Am I a slave of convention or a slave of Truth?' It is here that the rebel prophets, such as Ibsen and Bernard Shaw, are of such service to us. They supply the acid tests to what passes currency for Truth, and by their burning satire sometimes reveal false coinage. . . . . .

We should do well to emblazon upon our banners that noble sentence of Tertullian: 'We worship Truth, not Custom.' It is the central message of Jesus, and if He had worshipped Custom, there would have been no Cross. It was His absolute surrender to Truth, and His disregard of the insistent claims of Custom, which banded the Jews together to hound Him to death. How clearly He saw that endless issue betwixt Trust and Tradition: 'Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition.' A sense of history is much to be desired, but the tyranny of history is something to be avoided. The past ages give to us their jewels, but we need the precious stones of our own age too.[1]

Foreknown.

1 Pet. i. 20.—'Who verily was foreordained (RV 'foreknown') before the foundation of the world.'

Do not let us regard the work of Christ as a mere point in time. Many mistakes are made in speaking of the historical Christ, as if Christ did not come until He was born in Bethlehem. The Sonship and the Priesthood of Christ belong to eternity. The Cross was set up in the purpose of God before sin was committed. The Lamb was slain from before

[1] W. B. Brash, *The Pilgrim's Way*, 75.

the foundation of the world. It is in such a passage that we come upon the mystery of the eternal Sonship. Religion, as well as mathematics, has its axioms, and all axioms are unchangeable because eternal and by their very nature belonging to eternity. The mathematician insists that two straight lines cannot enclose a space. The truth that lies behind this axiom was a truth before there was any space to enclose. The same teacher tells us that parallel lines can never form an angle. These are not discoveries with a date. We cannot say that such axioms became true on such and such a day; they were always true, necessarily true, unchangeably true. An act of parliament is changeable; an axiom can never be amended.

Why should there not be axioms in the spiritual world? In no other world can they be dispensed with; why try to exclude them from the highest world of all? Collect the various passages in which certain truths are declared to be pre-temporal. 'The kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Matt. xxv. 34); 'Blood shed from the foundation of the world' (Lk. xi. 50); 'Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world' (Jn. xvii. 24); 'The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world' (Rev. xiii. 8); 'Chosen us in him before the foundation of the world' (Eph. i. 4). These passages show us that we are not under the fickle rule of chance, but under the benign inspiration and direction of sovereignty.

Thou hast, O Lord, a wondrous plan,
  To build a tower to reach the skies;
Its base is earth, its progress man,
  Its summit sacrifice.

'Tis only for the summit's sake
  Thou layest the foundation-stone;
The mornings of creation break
  For sacrifice alone.

Thou wouldst not have prepared one star
  To float upon the azure main,
Hadst Thou not witnessed from afar
  The Lamb that should be slain.

Thou wouldst not have infused Thy life
  Into the insect of an hour,
Hadst Thou not seen 'neath nature's strife
  Thy sacrificial flower.

To Him that wears the cross of pain
  Thou leadest all Thine ages on;
Through cloud and storm, through wind and rain,
  Through sense of glories gone.

. . . . . .

Thou wilt not let me live alone;
  Thou wilt not let me keep my rest;
Thy blast on every tree has blown
  To throw me on Thy breast.

Thou madest me for Him whose love
  From dawn to eve made His will Thine,
And all my ages only move
  Within that light to shine.[1]

The Gospel of God in Christ.

1 Pet. i. 20, 21.—[Christ] 'was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.'

THERE are few of us who would deny that the breakdown of the world we once used to know has raised again in a tremendous setting the question which every thoughtful mind will acknowledge is supreme over every other—the question of God. A clever cartoonist has represented our time as a young man with a mourning band upon his arm, whose eyes are fixed upon a sign of interrogation. The disenchantment from everything ideal which has blackened the last four years is the natural mood of convalescence after a serious spiritual illness. But we cannot continue merely to be disillusioned. That is an attitude which is bound to give way to reviving hope and renewed ventures of the spirit, which must needs go upon the quest of the fundamentals or die. Was there ever a time, within living memory at least, when so many people of all types were genuinely eager to get light upon the fact and the meaning of God? Below the wistful uncertainties that produce in us the haunting

[1] George Matheson, *Sacred Songs*, 13.

sense of indirection which paralyses effort to-day on almost every side of life, one can detect a constant movement of desire towards God. Amid the ruins of easy hopes and assured purposes there are multitudes who are lifting their eyes to heaven again and asking for God.

One does not need to be a deep or a trained thinker to see that it matters supremely to every man how much or how little he believes about God. Infinitely more is at stake than the traditions of our childhood, or the future of the Church, or the religious denomination in which we have been brought up. What hangs in the balance is the whole meaning and purpose of life, and the sanctions of all things moral, as well as the account we are to give of man himself and the worth of his being both here and hereafter. No social or economic revolution could equal in the tragedy of its consequences the certain results to mankind of the destruction of its faith and hope in God. Everyone who knows anything of industrial life knows that the welfare of industry and commerce depends upon certain conditions which business men describe in one word—confidence. By this they mean that they can carry on successfully only when they have the assurance that international and internal relations are stable. Otherwise things fluctuate so much that they cannot proceed upon any certain basis. The same thing is true on the incomparably higher plane of man's spiritual life and relationships. The world cannot really live when its spiritual exchange is disturbed by a fundamental uncertainty about God. The stability of civilization itself is founded upon its faith in God.

And so also is the stability of the single life. 'Work without hope draws nectar through a sieve, and life without an object cannot live.' That is what Jesus meant when He said that 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.' The security of a man's spiritual capital and the value of his labours alike depend upon whether or not he knows where he stands about God. He may so organize and invest his life as to seem secure against all risks of unlimited liabilities; but in his heart of hearts he knows that he is like a financial concern which at any moment may crash, because demands which he cannot meet are made upon him. 'The hardened heart and the lie in the soul' may do a great deal to help him to forget it; but always, and at every turn, the question waits—What about God? Insecurity about the fundamentals in the spiritual market spells endless trouble and, possibly, final bankruptcy to the soul.

Yet all the while there is nothing harder for the unaided mind than to be sure about God. No man who has lived much or thought much can easily take God for granted. To bid men trust God is only to leave unanswered the real question which is in their minds. What God? What is God like? What is His will? What, if any, is His purpose? There are those who, apart from the gospel, seem able to answer such queries in some such way as this: The facts that God is and that God is Love are the only things that make sense of life. God cannot be a maniac or a tyrant, because man at his best is not that; and because there are reason and goodness in us there must be the same things in God also. Others go further still. They add to the witness of their own consciousness the testimony of the great cloud of witnesses, and strengthen the case for God by the authority of the experts of the life of faith, which is slowly yet steadily being confirmed by the revolt of science against a merely material and mechanical view of things. They feel themselves to be only humble scholars in a college whose professors see further than they can, and are fully assured of what they can only dimly begin to discern. The trouble is that such largely second-hand faith has a tendency to break down before the impact of the facts of life. And it is haunted by the suspicion that, after all, the nature of things is an unsolved mystery which has never really unveiled its heart. The character of God, and therefore His meaning for life, are still a dark background of life which answers only dimly to the questions that are so much its vital foreground, and against which those questions still stand out black and unrelieved.

Unless there is something that can carry us further than reliance upon our unaided intuitions or upon the authority of the Saints and masters of the spiritual life we shall never do more than 'stretch lame hands of faith, and grope, and faintly trust the larger hope.' It is the wide-spread feeling of this that gives the gospel of Christ its new and magnificent opportunity to-day. For, if Christianity does anything at all, it speaks with authority about the questions of God. Behind all the superficial variations of form and expression which it has assumed and still assumes for men, it has this distinctive and unique thing to give them—a real knowledge of God. The really catholic thing which binds all Christians together and makes them truly one is their knowledge of God revealed in Christ Jesus. Nothing else in Christianity comes within measurable distance of that in vital importance and saving power. The Church stands or falls by its gospel of God. That called it into being, and that still feeds its life. And its claim to be able to heal the trouble of the world's life to-day is that it knows God and can bring men to God.

Such a world-embracing claim as that will at once stir impatience, if not resentment, in the minds of those who have never taken the trouble to consider the basis upon which it rests. A great many people are inclined to regard their own perplexities as if they were all new, and entirely unlike any which others have felt before them. But, if we consider for one moment what the gospel really is and the way in which it came to birth, we must see at once that, unless it is a palpable fiction, it does reveal God, and there is nothing essentially new about our difficulties at all. In soul and principle they are as old as the experience of man when first he faced the problem of the character of God over against the happenings, especially the tragic happenings, of life. No depths of darkness that any one of us has sounded are deeper than that into which Christ sank when He put to the final test on the Cross His invincible faith in God. The Gospels, which lead us on and up to the burst of glory in which the question of God was answered when He raised up Christ from the dead, lead us thither by a road which passes through the nethermost pit of life's denials and contradictions and defeats. As we read them we can see that the whole meaning of Christ's life and teaching was unqualified trust in the absolute reality of the reign of the God whom He believed to be on the central throne of things. That faith, and His refusal to compromise it in any way, brought Him to the Cross and His awful end. And when He died it seemed to those who loved and watched Him that the sun had set over Calvary upon a Godless world. But God answered Christ's challenge. The supreme issues had been put to the test, and the Father in whom Christ trusted responded when He raised Him up from the dead. That is the gospel—Christ putting to the proof the Father-love of God in unwavering faith, and God answering Him and declaring Himself in the resurrection of His Son. That is the fountain and foundation of the one faith that overcometh the world, the faith which is ours, 'who by Christ do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead.' For that puts Love upon the throne, and enables us to believe without reserve that we can dare to claim that, in spite of all its still unanswerable questions, as it has been boldly said, 'This is a Christ world.'

The one thing supremely worth doing is to face afresh the challenge of the Christian gospel of God in Jesus Christ. Get right about God! Get right with God! Begin at the beginning where all things for a man's life begins, and where, too, they all must end. If it be really true that God made us for fellowship with Himself, if around us and above us and within us He is the Father-heart which has come forth in time to make Himself known to us in His Son; if the very soul of this strange world—so confusing and complex in its surface appearance, and so painful and seemingly relentless in its impact upon our lives—is the Eternal Love that speaks in Jesus crucified and risen the life-giving word of assurance and peace; then why not break out of the prison-house, out into the open air

of God's new world of love, and hope, and faith? The bars are broken: the doors stand open; Christ opened them for all men when He died and rose again. Nothing is too good to believe about a God who is like Jesus Christ, a God who has proved in Christ's resurrection that the inmost heart of things, the soul of the universe, is at one with Christ, and answers to Him, and in Him is victor over the uttermost power of evil to challenge the reign of love.[1]

Through Christ To God.

1 Pet. i. 21.—'Who through him are believers in God.'

'THROUGH him.' The Church of the ages has underlined with the unfading scarlet of her gratitude and adoration these two words 'through him,' and they need to be underlined again to-day. For there is a tendency in many minds to reduce Christianity to a system of beautiful ideas, and to let its historical facts go overboard as a cargo scarcely worth saving. What is Christianity? Here is one type of answer: It is the Fatherhood of God; it is the brotherhood of man; it is the spirit of social service; it is the fellowship of the nobler life. That is all true and excellent so far as it goes; nobody denies that such ideas as these are a considerable part of our Christian heritage. But are they Christianity? And is it possible to have Christianity without Christ?

Such vagueness, as one can see at a glance, is very unlike the New Testament. The note struck in the words 'through him' is characteristic of every writer or speaker who had to do with giving Christianity at first to the world. The most microscopic study of the New Testament writings cannot find any section with which this thought is not interwoven like a thread of gold. If St. Peter says 'We believe in God through him,' St. John has his 'Worthy art thou'; St. Paul's letters are one long doxology to the name of Jesus; St. Mark, the earliest Evangelist, describes the Christian message as 'the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.' There is an immense difference between all this and a set of ideas, however beautiful in themselves. In Christianity, all ideas, ideals, duties, gifts centre in a Person: whatsoever there is of true or beautiful comes from Him and is mediated through Him.

So it is one thing to believe in God and another thing to believe in God through Christ. What are the characteristics of Christian faith in God? What are the differences between the characteristics of faith in God through Christ and that which, though it is faith in God, is independent of Christ? Let us mention three to which great prominence is given in the New Testament.

1. First of all, if we believe in God through Christ, we believe in a God whose Fatherly love and care extend to the minutest concerns of our life. Jesus called God His Father and taught His people to think of God as their Father, to love God above Himself, and far beyond, and to pray to the Father every day, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' And we must not forget that the spirit that is sent into the hearts of Christians is a spirit in which they cry 'Abba, Father.' The words in which Jesus spoke about God's Fatherly love are among the most wonderful words in the whole gospel. They have that peculiar character which makes us feel that the things they convey must be true because they are far too great to be imagined. 'Are not,' He said, 'two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. . . . Ye are of more value than many sparrows.' Could anybody have imagined that? Could anybody ever have thought or have said that if it was not true? It was the very truth itself He spake when He said, 'Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' If we believe in God through Christ we believe in a God whose Fatherly love and care extend to the minutest concerns of our lives.

[1] F. B. Macnutt.

¶ The difficulties of faith in a Fatherly government of the world are great. God is unseen and unheard; He tends to recede into unreality and space. Convictions concerning Him reached by each generation under its own circumstances and expressed accordingly tend to become traditions and unrealities when imposed upon the next. Doctrines of God do not necessarily imply contact with God. 'The blind old god of goodness' is to thousands of honest men and women a god so helpless as to be negligible. They cannot but feel—even when willing to acknowledge human responsibility for evil conditions—that the original responsibility rests with God. The greatest difficulties are probably personal and moral. We are slow to take all risks and to fling ourselves, even by way of experiment, upon the Father-God of Jesus. But only so we shall prove Him. It may be literally true that 'Divine Love has kept the world a-waiting that the world may go a-seeking.'[1]

2. The second thing is this: If we believe in God through Christ we believe in a God who forgives sin and restores the soul. It is possible to believe in God without believing that. Nature does not teach any forgiveness of sin. If the Christian is asking, as he must always ask, What must I do to be saved? then Nature is dumb. Nature has not a single word to say. Nature does not teach faith in a God who forgives sin and restores the soul; and even the Old Testament comes short of the Christian faith in this respect, for the Old Testament deals very much with the people of God collectively, representing God's people as a nation; and the very condition of the return of His favour to them is confused with the restoration of national prosperity. But in the New Testament, if we believe in God through Christ we believe in a God who cares for the despondent and the lost children one by one. We believe in a God who remembers the one lost sheep out of the hundred, and goes in quest of it; who loves the prodigal son and welcomes him among His children; who can work miracles of mercy; who can make the scarlet like wool and the crimson as white as snow. We believe in a God like this because Jesus believed in Him. And because of this faith Jesus Himself worked moral miracles and made bad men good.

¶ I remember a strange incident in China. I came across, in one of the mission colleges, a Chinese teacher who was a complete hypocrite. He drank, he gambled, and he had relations with married women. He was a man of some intellect and no little power. One night, sitting over the fire, he said to me, 'All this Christianity is a legend. Jesus, you know, is not an historical figure. I never say any prayers. I teach, because I can teach. But,' with a shrug of his shoulders, 'I do not believe what I teach.' I took no notice of his effort to get me into a theological argument. I spoke of the Christ of universal human experience, the Christ who saves, the Christ who redeems, the Christ who has made all the difference to me. He turned, with a strange light in his eyes, looking at me over his shoulder, his hands still extended to the fire, and 'How would I take that medicine?' he asked. I said to him, 'Will you pray from your heart, "Jesus, if there be a Jesus, I want you to clean me up"?' To my surprise, then and there, looking into the fire, he prayed that prayer. Then he got up and left me. The next day he came to me and said, 'You know, this thing works marvellously.' It was his first experience of personal religion. He had never before seen redemption as the central fact of Christianity. He said to me, 'Now I feel on top.' He had never before looked at religion as a real power that enters the heart, changes the life, and gives a new birth to the soul. I am quite sure he had never wanted to be cleaned up.[1]

3. And finally, if we believe in God through Christ, then we believe in a God who raises men from the dead, and who gives them glory; that is, if we believe in God through Christ we believe in immortality. It is quite possible to believe in God without believing in immortality. The Old Testament saints were almost entirely in that position. They did not know about the love of God, but it does

[1] Annie H. Small, *The Kingdom and the King*, 19.

[1] Harold Begbie, *Life Changers*, 119.

not follow from that that there is no connection between the two things. There is indeed the very closest connection. Faith in immortality is really an inference from faith in God. When God said, 'I will be their God and they shall be my people,' man could not sound all the depths of that promise; and it took years and generations for man to find out how much God meant by it. Abraham, Moses, and David could not take in that sounding, but our Lord Jesus Christ could and did. He knew that when God pledged Himself to man, He pledged something against which death was powerless. When God takes heed of a man, neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, can come between that love and that man. The question of immortality, when we come to the bottom, is really, 'Who is the stronger, God or death?' and the answer of Jesus is quite unequivocal. God is stronger, and even death can not pluck His children out of the Father's hand.

Now, anybody can state objections to immortality, and, what is more, anybody can feel them; and we must remember that in the lifetime of Jesus the objections to immortality had been stated just as acutely and as impressively as they have been stated since. There was a whole sect among the Jews who did not believe in immortality, and Jesus knew all that they could say and had no sympathy with them. Jesus was no Sadducee. He speaks about immortality, not as a difficulty, but as a most familiar domestic concern, as something intimately real and sure to Him: 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' Is that like a man guessing or talking of things that he did not know anything about? Is not that the confession of one who is in certain simple contact with the thing of which he speaks; and even in the agony on the Cross the faith of Jesus was not moved. 'To-day,' He said to the thief, 'shalt thou be with me in Paradise'; and in dying He said; 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' And God vindicated that faith when He raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory.

What avails that winter die,
  If death die not, winter's sting?
Hopeless, loveless, man would lie,
  Crown'd not Eastertide his spring.

Who would hope at all, or strive
  Overwhelm'd by fatal force?
Who would love at all, to grieve
  Parted by that dire divorce?

But from yonder gulf of gloom
  Not the Lord alone is risen;
Hope with Him has left the tomb,
  Love with him has burst the prison.[1]

[1] Sir J. R. Seeley.

PHILADELPHIA.

1 Pet. i. 22, 23.—'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit (RV omits 'through the Spirit') unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye (RV omits 'see that ye') love one another with a pure heart (RV 'from the heart') fervently; being born again.'

THERE is only one word in the original for 'love of the brethren.' It is the Greek word *Philadelphia*. It is sometimes translated 'brotherly love.' We have no single word for it.

Everyone knows how men with a common interest—say scientific enthusiasm, or a common experience; say life at the same school or college—will draw together and establish a kind of freemasonry of their own. The greatest illustration which history provides of this tendency is the Christian Church, and even in these early days of little scattered flocks, the miracle of unification and of

mutual recognition was going on. There were still the old, sharp divisions between one nation and another, between Jew and Gentile, between Greek and Barbarian, between master and slave; yet a deeper unity was beginning to run across all those divisions—they were Christians: in their hearts they felt their unity; at the Lord's Table they showed it; in a better world they knew it would be fully and finally realized. It will be perhaps the greatest thing that the Church has seen since apostolic days, when her Lord teaches her to recapture her ancient secret, and when across all her divisions that bond of brotherly love stretches again, warm and tender.

Here, then, we have (1) the fact of the purification of the soul; (2) the way in which that purification has been wrought in obedience to the truth; (3) the outcome or end of the purification—genuine (literally 'unhypocritical') brotherly love; then (4) the encouragement—'love one another from the heart fervently'; and, last of all (5) the secret and source of the whole matter—for it comes first though it is mentioned last—being 'born again.' Let us look at these steps in the order of their experience.

1. New Birth.—The centre of this passage is the first three words of ver. 23. It expresses the great fact which is ever to be borne in mind by Christian people: 'Being born again.' The doctrine of the new birth is not peculiar to St. John, as some have averred; it is clearly taught by St. Peter also. The change which passes over a man when he comes to Christ is so radical and thorough that it can be defined only in these terms: he has become a new creature; he has been born anew; a new life has been begotten within him by the energy of the Spirit of God. He lives from and towards a new centre; new motives inspire him; he is not his own; he has a new Master, even Christ. He does all things now for the sake of Christ. He lives not to please himself but to please God. To be a Christian is not to leave off certain things and to start doing certain other things. We may do that without making any change at the centre. It may be just a rearrangement of things at the surface; probably such a change would affect the character and spirit in some measure in time, but let us realize that the Christian life is not merely change of habit; that may take place from unworthy and impure motive. The Christian life is change of heart; where that takes place change of habit will be sure to follow. But it is more, and more radical, than change of habit; it is change of spirit, change of outlook. We have entered into a new world.

Now it is important, in relation to what follows, to notice that throughout the New Testament the two things that are prominently associated with regeneration are truth and love—truth, as the instrument through which, or along with which, the Divine influence is exerted; love, as the result which fills and takes possession of the soul, and makes it a partaker of the Divine nature. 'By his own will begat he us by the word of truth.' 'Love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God.' In raising man from the death of sin to the life of righteousness the Holy Spirit makes use of the truth, to flash light into the soul and to awaken love in the heart. These two things are the root of, or comprehensively include, all others. Truth reveals to the man, and sets impressively before him, everything essential to his salvation that it becomes him to know. It unveils to him himself, sin, God, Christ, mercy, the way to the Father, the welcome awaiting him, the grace promised, the power of the Cross, the Advocate on high, and so on. Spiritually impressed and made influential by the Divine agent that wields it, this word of truth calls forth contrition, faith, hope; inspires joy and peace, with other soothing and animating subjective results, of which the issue is love—love to God and man. This is the essential element of the new life, the pulsation that claims its presence and power; and it becomes, or constitutes, that central fountain of good in the soul whence can issue all holy affections towards heaven, and all the required virtue of earth. For truth to come to man, not in word only, but also in power, and by the Holy Ghost; and for the love of God to be shed abroad in the heart by the

Holy Ghost—for this to be done is, for him who is the subject of it, to be regenerated. He is now animated by what is above nature, foreign to the flesh—not born of it or belonging to it. He is raised into a higher sphere as to his inner life, and has instincts and aspirations congenial with it. The process is as an entrance into a new world. He who experiences it is born again, born of God; and he that is born of God loveth Him, and loveth what is like Him. Those, then, who have obeyed the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love, are God's children, whether the change was effected by a sudden conversion in riper years, or by the gradual increase of light and love, the secret, imperceptible insinuations of the Spirit, in the course of their being brought up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.

¶ 'I have a great debt to acknowledge to my Sabbath-school teachers in Kirriemuir, especially to one man. Boys, you know, are quick to see things, and though I was a little chap, scarcely reaching up to his knees, I could see quickly at first that he had not much interest in his teaching. Kirriemuir has always been hospitable to revival movements, and about this time a revival movement visited the town. I remember, for instance, getting a tract from Mr. M'Cheyne when he visited Kirriemuir. When the revival came it played upon my teacher, and I saw some change had come over him, and instead of showing little interest in his work, he did not get enough of us now, and was always ready to put himself to any trouble to teach us.'[1]

2. Obedience to the Truth.—'Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth.' We have already in this chapter been told two great fundamental things about believers—there is no holiness without effort, and there is no holiness without grace. Here is another—there is no holiness without guidance. The guidance is given to those who are willing to receive it.

(1) *The Truth.*—How can we grow the sweet, white flower of love? Its creation is not the immediate result of volition; it is the issue of a process. We cannot command it; we can grow it. It is not an 'alpha' but an 'omega,' the 'amen' in a spiritual succession. If we want the flower, we must begin at the root. If we want the love, we must begin with obedience. The first stage towards a fervent affection is 'obedience to the truth.' If a soul yearns to be crowned and beautified by the grace of a delicate love, it must put itself in the posture of 'obedience to the truth.' Ay, but what is this truth to which we are to pay obeisance? The Apostle has not used the word 'truth' before. He seems to have kept it in abeyance until by some preliminary thought he has prepared our minds to give it adequate content. He has been leading us through a pilgrimage of contemplation, and at the end of the journey he utters the word 'truth,' and if we would enter into his conception we must pack the word with the experiences of the previous way. We have been peering into the Fatherhood of God. The Apostle has been pointing out to us elements which we were inclined to forget. We looked into the Fatherhood for sweetness; he pointed out whiteness. We looked for gentleness; he pointed out holiness. We looked for tender yearnings towards the sinner; he would not permit us to overlook the Divine hostility to sin. Wherever the Apostle turns in the contemplation of the Fatherhood, it is the 'whiteness' that arrests him. He looks into the Father's judgments, and he beholds the whiteness of holiness. He glances behind the veil into the mysteries of redemption, and even amid the sacrifices of love he beholds the glory of 'the great white throne.' Wherever he turns his wondering gaze, it is the perception of a character 'without blemish and without spot' that brings him to his knees. When, therefore, we emerge from the solemn sight-seeing, as we do in the twenty-second verse, and hear the Apostle use the word 'truth,' we know that he inserts into the word the content of superlative whiteness, and that while he uses it he bows before the holiness of the Fatherhood of God. Here, then, we must begin the culture of affection. We must begin with the contemplation of whiteness, with a steady, steadfast gazing upon the holiness of the Fatherhood of God.

[1] *Alexander Whyte*, 22.

We must let holiness tower in our conception of God, as the dazzling snow abides on the lifted heights of the Alps. The 'truth' is the unveiled face of the Holy Father. The first step in the creation of pure affection is the contemplation of a Holy God.

¶ As I sat scrawling these silly figures on brown paper, it began to dawn on me, to my great disgust, that I had left one chalk, and that a most exquisite and essential one, behind. I searched all my pockets, but I could not find any white chalk. Now, those who are acquainted with all the philosophy (nay, religion) which is typified in the art of drawing on brown paper, know that white is positive and essential. I cannot avoid remarking here upon a moral significance. One of the wise and awful truths which this brown-paper art reveals is this: that white is a colour. It is not a mere absence of colour, it is a shining and affirmative thing: as fierce as red, as definite as black. When (so to speak) your pencil grows red hot, it draws roses; when it grows white hot, it draws stars. And one of the two or three defiant verities of the best religious morality—of real Christianity, for example—is exactly this same thing. The chief assertion of religious morality is that white is a colour. Virtue is not the absence of vices or the avoidance of moral dangers; virtue is a vivid and separate thing, like pain or a particular smell. Mercy does not mean not being cruel or sparing people revenge or punishment: it means a plain and positive thing like the sun, which one has either seen or not seen. Chastity does not mean abstention from sexual wrong; it means something flaming like Joan of Arc. In a word, God paints in many colours, but He never paints so gorgeously—I had almost said so gaudily—as when He paints in white.[1]

(2) *Obedience to the truth.*—The Apostle uses a very graphic word to describe the healthy pose of a soul in reference to the 'truth.' We are to be 'in obedience to the 'truth.' There is a stoop in the word. It is a kneeling at attention. It is an eager inclining of the ear to catch the whisper of the Holy God. But it is more than that. It is the attention of a soul that is girt and ready for service. The wings are plumed for ministering flight. It is a listening, for the purpose of a doing: 'Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them.' It is a soul waiting consciously and eagerly upon the Holy Father with the intent of hearing and doing His will. This is 'obedience to the truth' and this is the preliminary step in the creation and culture of God.

¶ If a man is a Christian, there was a moment in his past at which he potentially, and in ideal, purified his spirit, and that was the moment when he bowed down in obedience to the truth.[1]

3. Purification of the Soul.—There is nothing more pathetic in the long history of human aspiration than the desire of the human heart for purity, often questing through wild and devious paths in the desperate hope of a boon so great. The Old Testament has made us familiar with some of the forms taken by this desire among the Jews; but some of the Pagans had the longing also and their own ways of expressing that desire. The word *tauroboliatus* is sometimes found upon a Pagan tomb. It meant that the person so remembered had in his life-time submitted himself to the *taurobolium*. This was a ceremony in which the aspirant for purity went down into a deep pit in the ground: planks were laid over the mouth of the pit: then a sacrificial animal was slain upon the planks so that the shed blood trickled down upon the man beneath. Not in a Jewish sacrifice alone were there shadows of the Cross or hints of the yearning of the human soul to be clean.

4. Sincere Brotherly Love.—Love is so set in the forefront of this section as to gather to itself a special emphasis. This love is the crowning fruit of obedience: 'ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren.' It might be better if we transliterated rather than translated the word rendered 'unfeigned': then we should get the word 'unhypocritical,' and might hear in the Apostle's phrase an echo

[1] G. K. Chesterton.

[1] A. Maclaren.

of some of the counsels of the Master against hypocrisy. 'The art of dissembling,' says Leighton, 'though never so well studied, cannot pass in this King's Court, to whom all hearts are open and all desires known.'

Christ tells us, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' And that beloved disciple who drank so deeply at the fountain of his Master's love said, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.' It is not merely love and charity to all men, but specially and specifically 'love of the brethren' as brethren, because they are united to us in a new birth, and in a new relationship to God. Ought this not to produce naturally kindly feelings? It is most unnatural, if a man loves not his brother and sister, if he loves not his father that begat him, and his mother that bore him, and more unnatural—more unpreternatural, so to speak—for those who profess to be in God to love not His people. We should feel that we can sympathize with their sorrows, and join in their joys, as we cannot even in the sorrows and joys of a father, a mother, a sister, a brother, or any earthly relation or friend. Is it not so? We must admit that it is if we are in union with the family of Christ—with those of whom He says, 'They shall be mine when I make up my jewels.' If we show outward courtesy and kindness, what do we more than others? This yearning affection is one of the most blessed signs that a man has purified his soul by obeying the truth. 'If a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.'

¶ Dr. Whyte in his 'appreciation' of Bishop Butler has this reference to his two beautiful sermons on the Love of our Neighbour:—'It is in the second of those two sermons that this single seed is dropped which has raised such a harvest of thoughtfulness, and fellow-feeling, and brotherly love, in so many of Butler's readers—this single seed, that "we ourselves differ from other men just as much as they differ from us." The two sermons are summed up into this closing prayer: "O Almighty God, inspire us with this divine principle of brotherly love. Kill in us all the seeds of envy and ill-will. And help us, by cultivating within ourselves the love of our neighbour, to improve in the love of Thee. Thou hast placed us in various kindreds, friendships, and relations, as the school of discipline for our affections. Help us, by the due exercise of all these, to improve to perfection, till all partial affection be lost in that entire universal one, and Thou, O God, shalt be all in all."'[1]

5. Perseverance in Heartfelt Fervent Brotherly Love.—It may occasion a little surprise that, having reached this apparent climax in the thought, the affluence of a spontaneous affection, the Apostle should add the injunction, 'love one another with a pure heart fervently.' What is the purpose of the apparently needless addition? We have watched the ascending stages in the spiritual processes that issue in love; what if there are ascending stages in the refinement of love itself? There may be degrees of riches even in perfumes. Even love itself may be refined into more and more exquisite quality. That is the meaning of the Apostle's counsel. He urges them to seek for the superlative in the sweet kingdom of love, ever to set their minds on 'the things above' and to fix their yearnings upon still finer issues. When, therefore, the Apostle enjoins a more fervent love, he drives us back to the first preliminary stage of spiritual growth. When he appeals for higher notes of love, he is really counselling a deeper holiness. If our love is to be more intense, we must seek a 'closer walk with God.' There will come a more discerning love when there is a more devoted obedience. We shall pass from finer homage to rarer spiritual purity, and from rarer spiritual purity to increasing exquisiteness in love.

Fervently—that is, literally, 'on the stretch,' not with the loose string of the unstrung bow, but with the tension of the strings of the violin drawn out to their full. This is a model which almost seems to mock us. It is so much

[1] A. Whyte, *Thirteen Appreciations*, 248.

easier to be on the stretch for ourselves than to seek the good of others with the same eager energy. Our love seldom gets beyond 'temperate,' and never to boiling point. We have not learnt the secret of the heart bubbling over. We are not fervent in our love. We do not weep over our brethren's faults; or rejoice in their success as much as in our own; or love them with a passion which should act as an alembic for the evil that is in them. It was the Master's last prayer that we should love like this. He meant that we should put off anger, wrath, malice, and evil speaking; and that we should put on bowels of mercies, kindness, long-suffering, and forbearance. So would the world believe.

¶ In one section of a sewing machine all depends on a thread being kept constantly tight, so that the moment any slackness occurs the loose portion is picked up instantly and without fail. If that operation were left dependent on the watchfulness and quickness of a human operator, it would entirely fail. The worker would grow weary, would forget, would hasten to tighten the thread after the time was past, and all would go to wreck and ruin. But by entrusting the watch and the work to a bent elastic steel wire, an absolute infallibility is secured. The watcher never forgets, the worker never wearies. The work is done perfectly, and always at the right moment. The spring is always on the stretch, and never misses. Though it is obliged to watch the slackening, and pull the thread instantly tight, a hundred times a minute, all day long for twenty years, it never once forgets or fails. The precept requires a love of this sort—watching and working in a Christian's heart. If you need to remember your duty every time that a sudden injury occurs, you will not be in time with the soft answer that turns away wrath. Before love has gathered itself up, and determined on its course, the opportunity will be past. The disciple of Christ will appear as irascible, passionate, and revengeful as other men. There must be a spring—a law of love set once for all as a faculty of the new heart—that will operate instantaneously and uniformly. The disciples thought it was a burdensome and irksome task to forgive an injurer seventy times seven injuries. Such indeed, it would be, if you needed every time to reason the matter out and spur yourself on to duty. If the spring is not on, loops will fall, and the web will be spoilt. But the spring-love once inserted as a faculty of the regenerated heart will catch and keep every opportunity like a law of nature.[1]

¶ Sometimes it strikes me with a kind of sudden rapture how these words 'with a pure heart fervently' shall be fulfilled in our love to one another hereafter. How good must He be who, knowing our enmity, has given us such power of affection, natures so capable of intense delight. Could one only always believe this goodwill of God, how easy it would be to love, serve, and enjoy Him. What are the minds that can see, and not see this love, the hearts that can feel, and not feel this?[2]

The Abiding Word.

1 Pet. i. 23.—'The word of the Lord which liveth and abideth.'

When we speak of the Word of the Lord, we mean the very thought of the living God, sent forth to reach the mind, to dwell in the heart, and to become part of the life of His creature. As it comes from the Infinite, the Eternal, it partakes of His Truth, His Eternity, His Infinity. By it man knows God, and 'this is life eternal,' this is a permanent possession, this is a lasting heritage, 'to know thee, the only living and true God.

1. *The Moral Law abideth for ever.*—Right is right, and wrong is wrong, by an absolute decree. Though all appearances are against it, 'though hand join in hand'—appearances are one thing and reality quite another—right in the long run must prevail, and 'wickedness shall not go unpunished.' It is ever true that to put God first, to refuse to make any object other than Him the object of final worship, to consecrate to Him the gift of speech, to consecrate to Him the gift of time, to reverence authority where He has placed it, especi-

[1] W. Arnot.
[2] *Early Letters of Marcus Dods*, 176.

ally in fatherhood, which is the shadow of Himself, to respect the gift of life, to deal reverently with the tremendous power of the transmission of life, to respect the property of others, to respect that most valuable form of property, a neighbour's good name, to be loyal to truth, to guard from the touch of wrong desires the sacred sanctuary of motive—in other words the Ten Commandments, the Moral Law, these abide for ever. These come from the very heart, from the very nature, of God; these can be made a part of our very being; and, if so, we may be sure they will not fail us when all things pass and change.

¶ Moral law is permanent and universal. Men may rebel against it, but sooner or later it vindicates itself in its sure vengeance on the transgressor. We cannot compromise with it. No doubt we are often perplexed about the exact form of our right compliance with its demands, but we must not be tempted to suppose that morality can be bent to our wishes or convenience. Moral uniformities are as constant as what we call natural law. We do not win our freedom by opposing either. We become free by obedience.[1]

2. *The Catholic Faith abideth for ever.*—Call it the Divine revelation, call it the Gospel of Christ, call it the Catholic Faith, call it what you will; do not quarrel about names, but remember that that body of unchanging truth with regard to God's nature and man's dealing and man's relation to God does not change. It is full of simple truths for the devout and unlearned mind; it is full of the highest truths for the exercise of the most exalted intellect; but, above all, it is meant to feed and direct the immortal part of man. It is the knowledge to know which practically is to be learned for eternity, even if we are wanting in much culture, which is useful and interesting for the present moment; it is of such importance that not to know it and not to live by it, even if we have all other learning, is to be destitute indeed. Of all duties there is none more paramount than, in heart and life, to 'hold the faith.'

[1] *The Spirit of Man*, Essays from 'The Times,' ii. 86.

¶ It has been my lot to know not a few of the famous men of our generation, and I have always observed that there is no lasting happiness without faith. All 'Moral' satisfactions soon pall by custom, and as soon as one end of distinction is reached, another is pined for. There is no finality to rest in, while disease and death are always standing in the background. Custom may even blind men to their own misery, so far as not to make them realize what is wanting; yet the want is there . . . .

La vie est vaine;
  Un peu d'amour,
Un peu de haine . . .
  Et puis—bon jour!

La vie est brève:
  Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rêve . . .
  Et puis—bon s[illegible]

The above is a terse and t[illegible]
this life without hope of a fu[illegible]
satisfactory? But Christian fa[illegible]
of fact, changes it entirely.

The night has a thousand eyes,
  And the day but one;
Yet the light of a whole world dies
  With the setting sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
  And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
  When love is done.

Love is known to be all this. How great, then, is Christianity, as being the religion of love, and causing men to believe both in the cause of love's supremacy and the infinity of God's love to man.[1]

3. *The Bible,* in its sacred and unapproached pre-eminence, *abideth for ever.*—Its charm as a varied literature cannot but be widely felt; its wonderful pathos, its deep reality, its unbending witness to the glory of righteousness, its constant insistence on the reality and greatness of the unseen—these

[1] G. J. Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*, 151.

things no one can deny. But we are told in some quarters that the 'higher criticism' of this enlightened age has proved a solvent to the old beliefs about the Bible. Certainly reverent criticism has done much to illustrate its history and illuminate its meaning. There is also another kind of criticism which is far enough from reverent. But we may take courage. As various unbelieving criticisms arise, they startle or they attract; 'the world goes wondering after the beast,' the fashion passes, the last novelty is dismissed to the limbo of forgotten audacities, and the old Book lives . It lives on because it has in it the life thought of the unchanging God, felt in s moments to be of the last importance ctrine, for reproof, for correction, for tion, to the soul in the journey of life. recognize that a book is alive when it modern needs and hopes and pro- peals to the people of to-day. s not mean novelty. Discus- nd influence of Ibsen, *The* that the Norwegian dramatist per meaning for each genera- aning which the labours of modern ents have done something to bring to ht, but which future ages will certainly rasp more and more fully—a meaning which no changes in society or belief can put out of date. In a far profounder sense we claim that no changes in society or belief can put the Bible out of date. It is just as modern to-day, and just as living, as it was a thousand years ago, and as it will be a thousand years hence.[1]

4. *The Church abideth for ever.*—She has had a strange and chequered history. She has had her human side as well as her Divine. She has had her family quarrels, hindering her Divine mission. She has made great mistakes, she has had sorrowful defeats, but she has had triumphant victories. She has used all phases of changing civilization; she has used all varieties of human character and human circumstance; she has been at home with the high-born and she has made friends among the lowly; she has soothed the pain of the sick-bed and brought hope and consolation by the open grave, and she has not neglected to enter into the joys of the marriage morning. But, above all, amidst all the vicissitudes of her changeful career, the living voice of the living God has been heard in her, in her creeds, in her handing on of the sacramental mysteries, in her psalms of praise, in her words of prayer, in her voices of teaching. Other kingdoms may rise and flourish and wane. She carries with her the promise of perpetuity; she has in her the presence of Him 'who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore.'

¶ Dr. John Hunter calls the Church 'that great world-embracing society which has God for its foundation, Christ for its Head, and all faithful people for its members—the most ancient, the most continuous, the most universal society—for it began with the beginning of the race, it has drawn its members out of every nation and tongue, and out of every age of history, and it is existent in the world beyond this present world.'[1]

5. *Blessed memories, and holy teaching, and holy lives abide for ever.*—God's Word has sometimes come to us from a loving mother, or a wise father, or a dear friend. We may have neglected it at the time, but it was not lost; it does not return to God void, but accomplishes the work that was given it to do. Late—perhaps too late for our perfect peace of mind—we pay to the mouldering dust the tribute that should have been paid to the beating heart. Blessed are we if, though late, the tribute be paid, and into our souls there sinks as an eternal treasure this Word of the Lord.

¶ At the time of the death of Dr. John Clifford, the following poem appeared in *The British Weekly*:

My life grew weary, and, with toil, my spirit broke;
I met a man I knew, and when he spoke
I seemed to see the Master; heard Him speak
His message to the weary and the weak.
And now, when I, athirst of soul, would drink,
I catch his name—the man who made me think—

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 22.

[1] *John Hunter, D.D.*, 200.

Till sunlight on the field touched every clod,
And helped me know I lived and worked
with God.[1]

6. *Jesus Christ abideth for ever.*—The same in His unimpeachable authority, the same in the exact truth of His moral teaching, the same in the depth of His Divine relations, the same in His perfect example, the same in His tender pity, the same in His width of sympathy, the same in His priestly power of sacrifice, the same in His kingly prerogative of pardon; the strength of life, the support in death, the joy of His people for eternity, He is as He ever was—blessed be God, as He ever will be—the Way, the Truth, and the Life, to all who come unto God through Him.

I stay myself on Him who stays
Ever the same through nights and days:
The One Unchangeable for aye,
That was and will be: the one Stay,

O'er whom Eternity will pass
But as an image in a glass;
To whom a million years are nought,—
I stay myself on a great Thought.

I stay myself on the great Quiet
After the noises and the riot;
As in a garnished chamber sit
Far from the tumult of the street.

Oh, wheel of Time, turn round apace!
But I have found a resting-place.
You will not trouble me again
In the great peace where I attain.[2]

The Living and Abiding Word.

1 Pet. i. 23.—'The word of God which liveth and abideth.'

An old preacher in an Aberdeenshire village, found sitting reading by his door-side on a sunny day, said: 'I have left other books behind, and I am sitting this morning reading again the Book of Jeremiah the prophet, and I think it seems wondrously new.'

[1] John Wills.
[2] Katharine Tynan.

What is the reason of this agelessness, of this immortality of the Bible both in point of time and in point of power?

1. To begin with the very lowest of all, it rests partly upon its power as literature. We read our Authorized Version, and commend its wondrous style, that style so simple, so lucid, so musical, so haunting both to the ear and to the mind—it seems scarce to be a translation; it is such a perfect form of the perfect fact. But we seem to forget that the style of the English Bible is dependent on a good deal more than its English. It is beyond doubt that William Tindale was a great gift of God to his time, and no doubt God endowed him with a singular salt of expression in all he wrote; but men sometimes fail to realize that what William Tindale got to work upon was a book whose literary style far surpassed anything the English tongue has ever held within its expressive music. In this Book, in the Hebrew and Greek originals, there is a richness, an unapproachable variety, a splendour of phrase, a greatness of romance, a pathos, an eloquence, that nowhere else is approached. Small thanks to William Tindale, if, having this Book to translate, it moved him to exquisite melodies and rapturous sentences. For here is a Book in which men of genius use the Hebrew tongue to express the sublimest things of God: here is a Book where men like John and Peter and Paul, with their fresh inspiration, had their hearts dilating with the mightiest themes about which books can be written.

¶ Professor William Lyon Phelps of New Haven, in an address given at the Tercentenary celebration of the landing of the Pilgrims held in Carnegie Hall, New York, November 26, 1920, paid the following tribute to the Bible: 'I admit,' he said, 'that all but one of the Mayflower Pilgrims were deprived of college training. But, although they did not bring a library, they brought a Book to New England. The King James Version of the Bible was then a new Book. It was only nine years old. That Book is the best written book in the English language. It is greater than any philosophy

or novel, because it contains in its own pages the greatest short stories, the greatest essays, the greatest philosophy and the greatest beauty of thought. It is greater than all of the other books in the world combined. It has no rival. No group of people can be rightly described as uneducated who read and know the Bible. Because of their intensive training in the Bible the Pilgrims were educated in the best thought, philosophy and religion.'

2. The second reason of the agelessness of the Bible lies in its significance as history. We must not forget that the Scriptures are largely a history, that that is one of their supreme perquisites; that though they are written for our admonition, and are full of wise counsel and a mighty revelation, they are designed in great part to be a history of the Jewish people; and the Jewish people we still cheerfully admit to be the most remarkable race the world has known. Why, there are only twelve millions of Jews on the earth, and as one remembers their power, they might pass for seventy millions at least! That scattered, broken Jewish nation is a force no empire can afford to neglect. That Jewish nation stands high in art, in science, in literature, in music, in invention, in commerce; and had the Bible had no other claim than this, that it records the historical movements of the Jewish race, it would have been an immortal book, cherished the more eagerly as men advanced in modern civilization.

But this Book is not merely a history of the Jewish race, it is also a history of the early years, the formative years of the Christian gospel. Whether a man be a Christian or not, whether he be willing or not to admit that Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, who walked among men and died and rose again, he cannot neglect this Book that sketches and makes clear the early years of Christianity. Jesus is the most dominant personality of the day: His teaching rules the moral universe, His influence is pulsing through all our civilization, and His Book cannot be neglected, —even if it had not been exquisite literature —simply because it is a history of the greatest movement that the world has known.

¶ It is a wonderful Book, unapproached, unexcelled—the calling of a nation, the bondage in the vast civilization of Egypt, the wail over the first-born in the darkness, the crash of the Red Sea waves whelming the pride of Pharaoh, the cry of the soul of David seeking a door heavenwards out of sin, the rising of a star of promise, the hope of a day to be; till all the lines of history converge upon a Cross on a lonely hill, from the foot of which diverge all paths, winding and straight, along which move the history, the thought, the life of our own times, and the times that are to be.[1]

3. The third reason for the Bible's immortality is its importance as a book of morals. Now there are many great books of morals. Sir John Seeley has remarked that the flower of all literature in every nation has been a book of morals. The Babylonian tablets, the Egyptian Book of the Dead, all the famous books of Roman and Greek literature, have been books of morals. We have these great books of morals still with us—the Ethics of Aristotle, Seneca's Letters, the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius, the Reflections of Epictetus, and many among us in modern life praise these with unstinted breath. We have also the modern books of morals, of which one can find an account in Mr. Lecky's *History of European Morals*. But is it possible to name any one of these in the same breath with the Bible as a book of morals? How they pale and tremble as they come near this great Book! How feeble they are in their sanctions and motives, how low in their ideals. Cut out of men's moral thinking the ten commandments; filch out of our minds all knowledge of what the prophets have spoken; tear from our memories what psalmist and proverb-maker have set down in Israel; morals would become almost a blank! And then, if we go on to root out the beatitudes of Christ, and the teaching that flows from His very face; and passing on in our work of wreckage, if we tear away the Epistles, with their call to righteousness and purity and grace, the whole moral fabric of the modern world is in ruins. So this

[1] L. Maclean Watt, *Literature and Life*, 69.

great Book, though it made no other claim, did no other service than this, that it is of supreme importance as a book of morals, would have an immortal life.

¶ Twenty years ago, it was said to me by a young Oriental student at Cambridge, just on the verge of stepping into the full light of God and joy in Christ, after long and cautious inquiries into Christianity—it was said to me in words that I cannot forget—'I have been reading your sacred Book; and the difference between it and our sacred books in the East is not altogether in its precepts; for there are wonderful precepts, high and great, also in our books; but your Book, and yours alone, contains, I see, the secret of how they may be done.'[1]

4. But the fourth reason for the endless life of the Bible is the supreme thing, and that is its value as a quickening spirit. All these three, its importance as literature, its significance as history, its power in the realm of morals, would give this Book a supreme immortality; but here it stands not only high but unique. It is the Book of books because of its quickening power. 'The words that I speak unto you,' said Jesus Christ, 'they are spirit and life,' and this power of quickening has been proved by us all.

¶ Out of my biographical reading I might quote case after case which puts this point with vivid clearness that the Book is spirit and life. I might begin with Paul, telling you how he was pursuing his headlong course as a persecutor, till the word came to him, 'Thou shalt not,' and a new life had begun in his soul. I could remind you of Augustine, lying under the tree in the garden, and hearing the word spoken in his very ear, 'Not in drunkenness and wantonness, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh.' I could remind you of John Bunyan, on that Sabbath day standing on the village green with his bat in his hand to play at kit-cat, outraging his mother's counsel and his friends' warnings, and as he takes the bat there comes the word 'Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy,' and Bunyan stops and leaves the green, and goes home with the living seed sown in his heart. I could remind you of Hedley Vicars, with his life rebuking him in dispeace of conscience, coming to look by chance upon the words, 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin,' and standing up in a new liberation from his wrong-doing. I could remind you of John Bright telling an audience that he was moved from the beginning of his youth by a single sentence read one day in a Quaker's chapel, as he sat in the silence, 'The needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.' I could recall that little child, blind from his birth, who was asked why it was that he was born in blindness and others had eyes to see things beautiful, going up to the platform and writing these words: 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight,' and round the room there went a breath of God's spirit, and men were quickened as by nothing else. And I would close a long list of such things by reminding you of the words of one of the noblest minds that Scotland has known, how Sir Walter Scott, as he lay a-dying, said to Lockhart, 'Bring me the Book.' 'What Book?' was the question Lockhart asked, and Scott replied, 'Need you ask? There is but one.' It was Scott, you remember, who wrote those great lines about the Bible, in his own familiar metre, simple, and yet so moving:

> Within this awful volume lies,
> The mystery of mysteries.
> Happiest they of human race
> To whom our God has granted grace
> To read, to feel, to hope, to pray,
> To lift the latch and force the way,
> And better had they ne'er been born
> Who read to doubt, or learn to scorn.[1]

[1] H. C. G. Moule, at the Keswick Convention, 1902.

The Reading of the Bible.

1 Pet. i. 23.—'The word of God.'

How should the Bible be read?

1. Many people at the present time have the idea that we ought to read the Bible just as great and fine literature. That always

[1] W. M. Clow.

strikes a Christian—a Bible Christian—as a very extraordinary idea, not because he does not know what literature is, but because he does know. Literature is the reflection of life in general, but not particularly of the incorruptible life which is begotten by the Word of God. Even at the very highest, literature belongs rather to the natural man than to the new man. Literature is always racy of a particular soil. It has the sap of nationality in it, if it is good literature, rather than the breath of the Spirit. It is the literature of a nation—of Greece or Rome, of Italy or England, of France or Germany—rather than the reflection of the process by which God quickens man into an incorruptible life through His living Word.

(1) Now, there are two things that clearly distinguish the Bible from literature. The first is this. From beginning to end the Bible has an essentially practical character. Literature is a department of art, and so has its end in itself. Literature is free and ideal and imaginative, and constitutes a world all its own. When Shakespeare had once produced Hamlet or Othello, those great works of literature, he had done everything that he meant to do. We read them but we do not feel that Shakespeare is speaking to us, or that he expects us to say anything to him. No responsibility is created by the contemplation of works of genius in the form of literature. But in the Bible everything is the very opposite. Nothing in the Bible comes under the heading of 'art for art's sake.' The Bible cannot be read without responsibility being created in the reader, and that is why the Bible is so little read. People feel it is different from other books, and they dare not read it in the way in which other books are read. What the Bible unfolds is not a scene in which we can be spectators merely. In the drama the Bible unfolds there are no spectators. Everybody is drawn into the action. What the Bible holds up before us is the Lord's battle, and it calls upon everybody to take His side. And if a man tries to read the Bible as if it were just literature, then something reaches out from it and draws him in to the realities of life in which God and man are alike participants, and compels him either to choose the good part or to make, through cowardice, the great refusal.

(2) There is another thing by which the Bible is distinguished from all that we call literature. It is distinguished by its unity. You cannot say of any literature in the world as you can of the Bible, that it has only one subject and one aim. But you can say that of the Bible. The Bible is all about God, and what He has done for men, and what He has enabled them to do. It is all written by believers in God, by sharers in the incorruptible life. It is all designed to evoke faith in God. And in that unity the Bible is quite unparalleled. There is nothing the least like it anywhere else in the world. And what we call the inspiration of the Bible is correlative to its unity. Take it from the beginning to the end, and there is one breath of God, working in the same direction and to the same intent. And we believe in its inspiration and in its infallibility in this sense, that if a man submits his mind to the teaching of the Bible, if he lets that great unity which is in it take hold of him, it will lead him infallibly in the way everlasting. He will certainly not miss God, he will certainly not miss truth, as truth is realized in Jesus, if he gives himself up to be led by this record of God's communication with man.

2. Sometimes the Bible is read simply as the story of human experience—not as literature, but as history, and as life. And of course, that is a legitimate way of reading it. There is not a line in the Bible that was not written by human hands. There is not a thought in it that was not conceived in human hearts. In the highest sense the Bible is real. It is not an imaginary story of faith that the Bible gives. It is not a literary fiction of what faith might have been. It is a real story of what the life of faith actually has been. Read the fifty-first Psalm, and what do you find? You do not find an imagination of what repentance is, but you find the utterance of a real repentance, a passion of sorrow and pain that actually humbled a man before God, and melted the evil out of his heart and made him

a new creature. Or read the eighth chapter of Romans, and what do you find? You do not find an imagination of what a triumph over sin and death might be, but you find a picture of a real triumph, an actual victory, in which a living man glories over the subjugation of sin and death, and the world, and life, and time, and all things, through the love of God that beats in his heart through Jesus Christ. So that the Bible in that sense is the only adequate picture of the life of faith. And you see it in all its aspects. You see the conflict of faith, and sometimes its despair and its defeat, and again you see its exultations and its hopes and its triumph. And it would be quite a fair description of the Bible to say that the Bible is the only adequate confession of faith. It is the only thing in which the heart of man is poured out to God through all the experiences of the believing life, and nothing kept back. It is a great confession of faith.

3. But there is another and a simpler way of reading the Bible. It can really be read, and ought to be, as the Word of God—that is, as a witness to the revelation through which God calls forth the life of faith. That is the presumption with which we read the Bible when we are children. Our fathers and mothers who put it into our hand tell us what it is: that it is the Word of God and different from other books, that it is God Himself who speaks to us in it. That is how we read it in our childhood: and though the child's conceptions are transformed by education, his experience and his faith may remain. We begin by believing that the Bible is inspired, and then we doubt our early faith, because our ideas of what inspiration is are not equal to the truth; and we end—if we deal simply and sincerely with ourselves—we end by being surer than ever that God does speak to us in the Bible as He speaks nowhere else. We do not lift the Bible on the assumption that it is inspired, but we lay it down with the assurance growing constantly stronger in us that this is the place where we hear God's voice, and the only place where we hear it to this intent.

¶ The biographers of that Biblical scholar, Robertson Smith (who vindicated the right of historical criticism of the Bible in the Presbyterian Churches) cannot conceal their astonishment that to the very end of his life, in spite of all his learning, in spite of his special knowledge of other religions, he kept his old original faith in the inspiration of the Old Testament, in the unique character of the Old Testament as the inspired record of a Divine revelation. They cannot conceal their astonishment that he kept his faith. But is there any need for being astonished? To Robertson Smith it was self-evident that the Old Testament was unequalled by anything else in the world. And if any man thinks he can produce another book that has the same unity stretching through so many ages, and the same Divine life and power in it, then all we have got to say is: Let him produce it. Let him put this thing which is the parallel to the Bible on the table, so that we can see it. And certainly the thing has yet to be done. 'The Word of the Lord endureth forever, and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.' [1]

The Glory of Man.

1 Pet. i. 24.—'All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.'

The glory of man! When an expression like this challenges our attention, we feel—do we not?—that we are face to face with one of those phrases which we commonly use, which go without saying, which take their place in our common parlance and are easily accepted without serious examination, but which, none the less, if we are to lay the apostolic meaning deeply to heart, we require to decipher or even to dissect.

1. What is glory?

When we stand on a headland on an autumn evening and watch, under the lashes of the angry wind, the changeful agonies of the seething sea; when the canopy of gloom changes gradually in form and colour, and is shot through and through with glittering shafts of sunset brilliance; when the mighty

[1] James Denney.

ramparts and bastions which seem to mark some unseen city in the clouds are all aglow with fire, and the heavy waves which form the foreground become less like illumined water and more like molten gold; when sea and sky, when clouds and water together form a harmony of splendour, startling, threatening, beautiful, but full of awe—that strange something in us which enables man to give life to Nature, that whisper of our own immortality which we can convey to cloud and sea, wakens within us with redoubled force, and we exclaim, 'This is glorious.'

Or sitting by our own fireside, lifted out of the cares and frets, the worries and perplexities of daily life, by some stanza of a real poet—a Dante, a Shakespeare, a Browning—feeling how truth and genius can illuminate the common things, can help us to stand above the degrading pettinesses of every day, we lay the book down with a sigh of gratitude and say, 'This is glorious.'

Or when, in narrow circles of life and among homely things, in ways and places where genius does not enter and culture finds no home, we notice some simple loving act which finds no historian, some strong self-sacrifice, some pure and tender pity, or some self-denying sympathy which looks for no self-advertisement—'This,' we say with reverent homage, 'this is glorious.'

Always and everywhere it is beauty that has the power to move the sensibilities and the thoughts of the heart of man; it is the fitness and harmony of the parts that constitute the beauty; but raise it—to use a phrase of mathematics—raise it 'to the highest power,' let it have that touch of mysterious life, that thrill of electric force, which is pre-eminently capable of making our very being vibrate with an astonishment of joy—this, then, this is glory.

2. 'The glory of man!' Yes, man in many departments of his wide-reaching activity has the glory that thrills and exalts him in this mortal life.

There is, for instance, his glory in relation to Nature. How marvellous have been both the discoveries and the consequent achievements in the fields of science! Men for ages enjoyed the beneficent power of the sunlight. In this age they are able, by means of the solar spectrum, to know the very material of the sun. Space has been conquered; Time almost reduced to obedience. Nature, for many, has ceased to be so full of poetry or pathos or terror. By understanding her and obeying her, men have made her a useful servant, a carrier, a messenger, if not a friend. The discoveries of science are among the glories of man.

Think, again, of the development of those arts and inventions, side by side with a more enlightened social sentiment, which have made this scene of sense and time more suitable, less painful, to man as a passing home. We are not foolish if we view these as among the gifts of God, from whom all good gifts and all perfect gifts surely come. We are foolish only if we view them as the ultimate objects of ambition, and the final satisfaction of an immortal creature. These, too, cannot fail to be remembered when we talk of the glory of man.

Or think of the beauties of art—the songs of sweet singers, the entrancing notes of music, the triumphs of architecture—or the development of the principle of loyalty to love and duty which has created or guided the immeasurable blessing of a civilized society and a Christian home. The mind has only to rest for a moment on any of these very real blessings to feel how real, how attractive, is the 'glory of man.'

3. But, however splendid be the gifts of civilization, however fruitful and useful the discoveries of science and the inventions of mechanical ingenuity, however much our admiration is justly won by the varied and striking spectacle presented to us in the modern world, still—just as we act in proportion to our higher nature—our thoughts go far beyond it, and we are sure that, however beautiful, however touching, however excellent for its own purposes much of it is, it must fade from our sight and sink below our horizon when we come to die. We may have had great successes ourselves, or been witness

of them in others; we may have been delighted with the rich gifts of a time so abundant in possessions and opportunities as that in which our lot is cast; but in serious moments, and when the hurry of life will allow us to be thoughtful, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that, with all our many blessings, with all our intoxicating discoveries, the main conditions of the journey of life have not changed. There is still the mystery of bodily pain; there is still the darker mystery of moral evil; there are still disappointed hopes and broken hearts; and still, before us all—

Black-stoled, black-hooded like a dream—

there is the inexorable form of death. If we are to make anything our own in so real a sense that it may be ours for ever, it must be something more than the glory of man.

There is one great permanent power which has final force beyond all known forces in this sad world; whatever else be passing, it has a lasting force. To it we owe whatever is best within us. It can change darkness into brightness, and turn sorrow into joy; it can illuminate the blackest clouds, so that they are not accepted as a final barrier, but are known to cover something beautiful beyond. It can break the hardest heart and unlock the most close-fastened conscience. It can make the most humble life, the most trying circumstances, fruitful and even happy. It can give life brightness, and even take the darkness from the grave. It is not of time. It is not passing. It is lasting; it is of eternity—Self-Sacrificing Love—the love of God for His own glorious sake, the love of man for the sake of God.

A few more years, a few more breaking dawns and setting suns, a few more stretches of brightest joy, a few more leagues of cloudy sorrow, a few more spring flowers coming with their gay young life, a few more autumn leaves driven distracted and helpless before the pitiless gale, a few more meetings, a few more partings, and for us it will all be over. No. Not all; for every high purpose faithfully followed, every true act of penitence for wrong that has been committed, every effort to do our duty, every humble act of kindness, considerateness, self-sacrificing devotion, will meet us again, by Christ's merits and Christ's mercy, in that eternity to which *they*, to which *we*, belong, in the 'Well done, good and faithful; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'

¶ What is one to hold on to in such a swift flux of things? The pleasures we enjoy at first fade; we settle down by comfortable firesides; we pile the tables with beloved books; friends go and come; we acquire habits; we find out our real tastes. We learn the measure of our powers. And yet, however simple and clear our routine becomes, we are warned every now and then by sharp lessons that it is all on sufferance, that we have no continuing city; and we begin to see, some later, some earlier, that we must find something to hold on to, something eternal and everlasting in which we can rest. There must be some anchor of the soul. And then I think that many of us take refuge in a mere stoical patience; we drink our glass when it is filled, and if it stands empty we try not to complain. . . .

To me there are but two things that seem to point to hope. The first is the strongest and deepest of human things, the power of love—not, I think, the more vehement and selfish forms of love, the desire of youth for beauty, the consuming love of the mother for the infant—for these have some physical admixture in them. But the tranquil and purer manifestations of the spirit, the love of a father for a son, of a friend for a friend; that love which can light up a face upon the edge of the dark river, and can smile in the very throes of pain. That seems to me the only thing which holds out a tender defiance against change and suffering and death.

And then there is the faith in the vast creative mind that bade us be; mysterious and strange as are its manifestations, harsh and indifferent as they sometimes seem, yet at worst they seem to betoken a loving purpose thwarted by some swift cross-current, like a mighty river contending with little obstacles. Why the obstacles should be there, and how they came into being, is dark indeed. But there is enough to make us believe in a Will that does its utmost, and that is assured of some bright and far-off victory.

A faith in God and a faith in Love; and here seems to me to lie the strength and power of the Christian Revelation. It is to these two things that Christ pointed men. Though overlaid with definition, with false motive, with sophistry, with pedantry, this is the deep secret of the Christian Creed; and if we dare to link our will with the Will of God, however feebly, however complainingly, if we desire and endeavour not to sin against love, not to nourish hate or strife, to hold out the hand again and again to any message of sympathy or trust, not to struggle for our own profit, not to reject tenderness, to believe in the good faith and the good-will of men, we are then in the way. We may make mistakes, we may fail a thousand times, but the key of heaven is in our hands.[1]

So brief a life, and then an endless life
  Or endless death;
So brief a life, then endless peace or strife:
  Whoso considereth
How man but like a flower
  Or shoot of grass
Blooms an hour,
  Well may sigh 'Alas!'

Yet saints are singing in a happy hope
  Forecasting pleasure,
Bright eyes of faith enlarging all their scope;
  Saints love beyond Time's measure:
Where love is, there is bliss
  That will not pass;
Where love is,
  Dies away 'Alas!'[2]

Progress.

1 Pet. i. 25.—'The word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.'

THERE are those who deny that we are to look for any progress in the interpretation of Christian truth, and who assert that in this respect there is an impassable gulf between theology and all the other sciences. But such a contention cannot be maintained for a moment. In one sense none of the sciences is progressive. The facts which are the subject of investigation by the sciences have been the same throughout the ages. The relation of the heavenly bodies to each other, their nature, magnitudes, motions, distances, of which astronomy treats; the ultimate atoms of which, apparently, all things are composed, their bulk and weight, complex movements, and various combinations, into which chemistry inquires; the earth and all that relates to it, which forms the subject of geological research; the silent processes that are going on year after year in the formation of leaf and stem, of flower and fruit, with which botany has to do; the properties and relations of quantities, which form the subject of mathematical investigation—these remain the same as years and centuries roll by. In this respect there is no progress. But of the marvellous progress which has been made in man's knowledge of these things there is abundant proof. Similarly with regard to theological science. The great facts and truths which are the subject of its investigation remain unchanged and unchangeable. The great God of whom it treats in His nature and perfections is from everlasting to everlasting the same. And the stupendous facts with which it has to do—the incarnation, the life, the death, of the Lord Jesus Christ; sin, responsibility, redemption—are similarly unalterable. But surely the whole history of the Church of Christ proves that progress is the law of the apprehension and interpretation of these facts. Tertullian argued that our conception of God is inaccurate unless we conceive of Him as clothed in bodily form. Augustine repeatedly asserted that the unbaptized infant is lost. For centuries it was commonly held in the Church that the death of Christ is a payment made to the devil, on the ground of which he is obliged to release those who through sin had become his captives. These are but illustrations which are by no means exceptional, so true is the oft-quoted language of the pilgrim father, 'The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His word.'

1. Take the truth of the Divine Father-

[1] A. C. Benson, *The Upton Letters*, 168.
[2] Christina G. Rossetti.

hood.' A very influential French writer has said that this constituted the whole of our Lord's theology. That, according to the accounts given us by the four Evangelists, He insisted upon it more copiously and strongly than He did upon any other truth cannot be doubted by anyone who bases his answer upon the words of Christ which they have recorded. He asserted distinctly that the whole of His life was one unveiling of the Father. The statement that when we speak of God as the Father we are only using a metaphor with which human relationships supply us is in deadly opposition to the teachings of our Lord. According to those teachings the word expresses the relation arising out of the very nature which He sustains to men, a relation, consequently, which is as unchangeable as Himself. He pointed to the human relationship between father and child as a dim reflection of the relationship of God to us. Where the human relationship is seen in its purest, holiest, tenderest form, there is seen most of the Divine. If we obtain our knowledge of God from the teachings of Jesus Christ, then we shall not have one thought of Him dissociated from this central idea. Whether as the object of worship, as the God of providence, as giving us all things richly to enjoy, as filled with a glowing hatred against sin, as expressing that hatred in indignation and wrath, as Love or as a Consuming Fire, God is unalterably, from everlasting to everlasting, in His very nature, the Father. That truth is the foundation of the theology of Jesus Christ. And, happily, it is becoming more and more the foundation of the theology of the Church of Christ. God speed the day when it shall occupy the same place in every section of the Church and in every Christian's heart and life that it occupies in the teaching of Christ.

2. Again, Christ taught us that God the Father is immanent in all things, and is the Source of all that is good, and true, and beautiful, and lovely in the world. He did not teach us to think of God as seated on some far-off throne, looking with indifference on all that transpires here. He did not teach us to think of Him as having endowed the world with mysterious forces that work apart from Him. The notion that God's relation to this world is like the relation between the watchmaker and the watch has no place among the teachings of Christ. He never spoke of any impersonal agency, any blind force, any mere tendency—call it what you will—at work in this world apart from God. The sun rises each morning at an hour and a place that can be foretold with exactness; but, says our Lord, 'He causeth his sun to shine.' The rain falls, and doubtless in harmony with laws which will one day be formulated; but these are the mere modes of His working. 'He sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust.' The sparrow, ruthlessly destroyed, lies lifeless at our feet. 'Not one of them falls to the ground without your Father.'

I come in the little things,
Saith the Lord;
Not borne on morning wings
Of majesty, but I have set My Feet
Amidst the delicate and bladed wheat
That springs triumphant in the furrowed sod.
There do I dwell, in weakness and in power;
Not broken or divided, saith our God!
In your strait garden plot I come to flower:
About your porch My Vine
Meek, fruitful, doth entwine;
Waits, at the threshold, Love's appointed hour.

I come in the little things,
Saith the Lord:
Yea! on the glancing wings
Of eager birds, the softly pattering feet
Of furred and gentle beasts, I come to meet
Your hard and wayward heart. In brown bright eyes
That peep from out the brake, I stand confest.
On every nest
Where feathery Patience is content to brood
And leaves her pleasure for the high emprize
Of motherhood—
There doth my Godhead rest.

I come in the little things,
Saith the Lord:
My starry wings
I do forsake,

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Love's highway of humility to take:
Meekly I fit My stature to your need.
In beggar's part
About your gates I shall not cease to plead—
As man, to speak with man—
Till by such art
I shall achieve My Immemorial Plan,
Pass the low lintel of the human heart.[1]

3. We may trace the same progress in the truer conception that is becoming prevalent of the meaning of personal salvation. There is an indissoluble connection between what is central in our conception of God and the meaning we attach to the word 'salvation.' If we think of God as outside the world rather than immanent in the world; if the mental picture that the word 'God' calls up before us is that of a Throne, a King, a Judge; and if His Fatherhood recedes into the dim background, then the word 'salvation' will be suggestive chiefly of deliverance from the consequences of sin, escape from the punishment of sin, salvation from wrath to come, rather than salvation from that which causes wrath, salvation from sin itself. That sin entails terrible consequences is patent enough. That men by wilful disobedience do 'treasure up for themselves wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God'; and 'that to those who obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish,' is undoubted. But God's attitude towards sin, and consequently the true nature of sin, its exceeding sinfulness, and its terrible consequences, can be rightly understood only in the light of the truth that God is the Father. Correlative to the thought of God as Judge is sin as a violation of the right of others. Correlative to the thought of God as a King is sin as rebellion. But correlative to the thought of God as the Father is sin as baseness and ingratitude. We have to do not with a mere judge, whose function it is to pronounce sentence of condemnation, not with a mere king, of whom, in common with countless others, we are the subjects; we have to do with the Father, the intensity of whose love for us is the only gauge of the intensity of His hatred of sin. He Himself shows His determined, changeless, vehement hostility to all sin in punishing. 'He makes the ways of transgressors hard.' We speak of God's laws of retribution. What are they but the sure, invincible modes of His working? He is in all the pain and vexation and bitter shame and disgrace which overtake the sinner, and thus shows what an evil thing and bitter it is to sin against Him. In all these things He is showing the fierceness of His wrath against sin, in other words what sin really is. There is no suffering of any kind whatever within the range of His resources which He Himself will not inflict in order to destroy sin in us. Were it possible that we should be free from the consequences of sin, whilst still under the power of sin, it were no boon at all. But happily it is impossible. Thank God that He punishes until He destroys sin. The salvation that the sinner needs is salvation from sin. The only Saviour who can meet the necessities of the sinner is that Saviour of whom it is written, 'His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.'

¶ Sin can only be burned out of our nature by our sense of its misery, and by our acquiescence in the righteousness of that misery—which acquiescence we can never truly give until we see the holy love of God resting upon us, and manifesting itself in the law against which we have sinned, and in the misery which is inflicted upon us through our sin, and on account of our sin. But holy love is a thing which our natural life is incapable of seeing; for our natural life is consciously under the condemnation of sin, and is bearing its punishment, and it cannot draw near to God, or look on God; for its condemnation implies and contains a separation from God—it therefore cannot know love, or see love, because God is love—the natural life, in truth, is the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. And thus, while we continue to live in this natural life, and to see things in its light, we can see nothing in the punishment of sin but what increases our fear, and enmity, and opposedness to God. And thus punishment acts as a poison until we see it by the light

[1] Evelyn Underhill.

of another life—an uncondemned life—which has freedom of access to God, and which can see His love. Now, this is the great thing which Christ has accomplished by suffering for us; He has become a head of new and uncondemned life to every man, in the light of which we may see God's love in the law and in the punishment, and may thus suffer to the glory of God, and draw out from the suffering that blessing which is contained in it.[1]

4. We can trace progress also in the wider recognition of the truth that Christianity is coextensive with every-day life. The teaching has received its death-blow which makes the essence of Christianity consist in the observance of days and months and seasons, in the endeavour to cherish certain emotions and perform certain duties at certain specified times. But never was it more widely felt among Christian men and women than it is to-day that, as Arnold of Rugby puts it, 'the pretended distinction between spiritual things and secular is utterly without foundation.' The division rests entirely on principles of heathenism. The language in which the Apostle Paul gathered up the teaching of our Lord on this subject—'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do everything in the name of Christ'—well sets forth the aspect of Christianity which is coming more and more to the front. However punctilious he may be about religious duties, the man who slanders his neighbour does not follow Christ. The loudest zeal for orthodoxy is not an off-set against the absence of that charity which thinketh no evil. The Christian man is a Christian alike in the house of prayer and in the house of business; in speaking to God and in speaking to his fellow-man; in what he says or what he refrains from saying. More and more widely the truth is being recognized that only hypocrisy separates between Christianity and every-day life; that the Christian, whether as a domestic servant sweeping a room, a merchant prince employing thousands of his fellow-men, an ardent student of science searching after the truth, or the Prime Minister of the country guiding its helm, is one who serves the Lord Christ.

¶ The career of Sir Harry Lauder is a modern romance of character. We admire the native genius of the Scottish pit-boy, whose clean, simple, homely songs move our hearts; but what we most admire in Harry Lauder is the simple rugged grandeur of character with which he has clung to the sober virtues derived from his pious upbringing. In the midst of a life exposed to such sharp temptations as the music-hall stage, Harry Lauder has never concealed his love of sobriety, his regard for Sunday, his belief in thrift, and his delight in clean living and hearty laughter. Like St. Paul, Sir Harry Lauder can say: 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.' He has lived it on the boards of the music-hall stage.[1]

5. The universal brotherhood of man is also assuming a place in the creed of the Church which is a further indication of the progress we are tracing. This truth is but the complement of the essential Fatherhood of God. Where one is accepted the other cannot be ignored. If there is one God and Father of all, then, of course, all are brethren. Surely, if slowly, the truth is being learned that God's attitude towards His children—who, though exposing themselves to His wrath instead of rejoicing in His smile, are children still—was truly represented by our Lord, who, when publicans and sinners crowded around Him to hear Him, spoke to them the parables of 'the lost piece of silver,' 'the lost sheep,' 'the prodigal son.' Christ opened up to us the very heart of God, as it yearns over the lost, when He sat down and conversed with the woman of Samaria, when He received sinners and ate with them, when He wept over Jerusalem, when He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring them to God.

And, happily, with the clearer recognition of such truths as these to-day, keener interest than ever has been awakened in the question, 'What can be done to seek and to save the lost?' As the outcome of modern grappling with the difficult questions which

[1] *Letters of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen*, 389.

[1] A. Porritt, *The Strategy of Life*, 23.

estrangement from God and virtue presents, in a great variety of ways unchronicled by the Church loving hearts are searching for the footsteps of Him who went about doing good, and are endeavouring to tread in them. In our factories and our workshops, in our workhouses and our prisons, among all sorts and conditions of men, by all the means which thought and experience suggest, the attempt is being made to cause the reality of the Divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood to be seen and felt. Faithlessly to stand by and tremble for the ark of God, uttering loud laments which only discourage others, is unworthy of the followers of Christ. Little we may be able to do, but let that little, whatever it is, be done with a fidelity and enthusiasm inspired by the conviction that, whilst 'the grass withereth and the flower falleth away, the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.'

¶ There is one motto which is more Christian than Mr. G. F. Watts' saying, 'The utmost for the highest,' and that is 'the utmost for the lowest.' Life's biggest and bravest duties are, according to the teaching of Jesus, owed to 'the least of these my brethren.' While we are all applauding the sentiments that God helps those who help themselves, the one outstanding Christian teaching is that God helps those who cannot help themselves; and that when Christ thrust into the foreground of His programme the weak, the helpless, the morally, spiritually and economically insolvent, and told an astonished world that the last should be first, the least should be greatest, and the lost should be found, He was 'setting the pace' for all who aspire to follow Him.[1]

Unadulterated Milk.

1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.—'Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.'

This passage is difficult to translate, as the difference between the AV and the RV makes evident. In such a case the context is often the best guide, or at least the first thing to be looked at. Now the first chapter of the Epistle expresses emphatically two great truths: that those to whom the Apostle writes had been 'born again'; and that the instrument of this was 'the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.' But as yet, he now says, they are only 'newborn babes,' and, as such, have need to 'grow.' And just as the proper nourishment of babes is the milk of her that bore them, so the milk of that word by which they were born again is that which they must crave, and that whereby they must grow.

The sense of the verse thus settled, the translation may be considerably improved. 'Desire' is too weak to express what the Apostle means—the craving of newborn babes after their mother's milk. And 'long for' is not a happy substitute for either the natural or the spiritual milk. But 'crave,' a good English word, and the very thing intended, should doubtless be the word used. 'Sincere milk' probably meant (in the old sense of the word) 'pure,' 'unalloyed'; and 'unalloyed' well enough expresses the sense of the Greek adjective. But, as applied to milk, 'unadulterated' is the best word; and a word of the same import is applied to the Word of God by the Apostle Paul: 'We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God' (2 Cor. ii. 17). The Revised Version here is most unhappy. A guileless person we understand, but a guileless substance is nonsense. The English word most suitable here expresses the idea of every intelligent reader: 'Crave the unadulterated milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.'

¶ The Greek adjective is used only once elsewhere in the New Testament, in Rom. xii. 1, and there it is properly rendered 'reasonable'; but though the Revisers could hardly translate 'reasonable milk' they have used 'spiritual' as the nearest to what seemed the meaning. But the Apostle is not characterizing the milk he is speaking of as incorporeal, he is not characterizing it at all; he wants to hold up the Word itself as the milk they were to crave, and to express this he turns the noun *logos*

[1] C. Silvester Horne, *Pulpit, Platform, Parliament*, 81.

into an adjective *logikos* (a kind of play upon the word for which we have no English equivalent).

1. Every figure of speech breaks down at some point, and it is difficult to find an intellectual reconciliation between this metaphor of 'newborn babes' and the moral qualities, 'malice, guile, hypocrisies' and the rest, which they were required to put away, the products of that pagan environment in which their souls had been soaked from birth. Can the same person be both black and white? Experience reconciles every paradox, and in the experience of the Church from the first days until now souls have often been seen which were old in sin and young in Christ. 'There is no one comes to the school of Christ,' Leighton says, 'suiting the philosopher's word, *ut tabula rasa*, as blank paper, to receive His doctrine; but on the contrary all scribbled and blurred with such base habits as these—malice, hypocrisy, envy.' At some point they must begin as little children. What wonder if, belonging to two worlds, life-long citizens of one, fresh initiates of another, some of the mire of the former clings to them even when they have entered on the latter? But all things are possible to those who are born 'not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God.' Science and faith conspire to teach us to believe in the survival of the fittest: what so fit to survive as the life which the Spirit has implanted? Now it is the unadulterated food that ministers to growth. It is the high ideal that lifts men to the heights. The loftiness of one's aim determines the degree of one's growth. In these matters one's spiritual gravitation is governed by one's personal aspirations, the spirit pursues the path and gradient of the desires.

2. But notice the relation in which the negative and the positive stand to each other. Although the precept about putting off first meets our eye, the act is not represented as taking precedence in point of time. It is neither first put off the evil, and then admit the good; nor first take in the good, and then get quit of the evil. The language of the text determines that the two acts are strictly simultaneous. The form of the sentence is—'Laying aside these, desire this.' This is scientifically correct as well as scripturally true. The coming of Christ unto His own—to the throne of a human heart—'is like the morning.' And how does the morning come? Is it that the light first comes, and then the darkness departs? or that the darkness first departs, and then the light advances? It is neither. As the light advances, the darkness recedes. The processes are strictly simultaneous. In Nature the advance of light is the cause, and the departure of darkness the effect; such, also, is the rule in the spiritual sphere. It is indeed true that evil must depart to let in the good; but it is the advance of the good that drives the evil before it. Christ is the Stronger who overcomes the strong, and casts him out, and reigns in his stead.

To take in the milk and retain also the envies and evil speakings, will give neither comfort nor growth. The effort to mingle these opposites mars the happiness of many a life, and distorts all its testimony for the truth of the gospel. To pour in the milk on these manifold corruptions still retained and cherished produces neither health nor strength. The milk thus mingled sours, and so disturbs. No man can serve two masters.

¶ A will which is divided, which is conscious of opposite tuggings, which is never able to give itself freely either in the one direction or the other, obviously cannot function in the only way proper to a will. It is in a condition fatal to its health, fatal to its nature. Like a muscle seldom exercised, it is on the way to atrophy. One may indeed find it difficult to explain how a will which is not actuated by self-determination—a glad, rejoicing, and never challenged self-determination—can be thought of in any terms of volition, can be named a will.

A man who carries about with him such a will as this obviously cannot be a happy man. In the sphere of the intellect he may make shift with unsettled opinions, and, like the famous bishop of Browning, exercise his comfortable choice between a life of faith diversi-

fied by doubt and a life of doubt diversified by faith. But this will not do in the sphere of action—the true sphere of the will. A man cannot say to himself with any reasonable prospect of happiness, 'I will live a life of love diversified by hate,' or, 'I will devote some of my time to seeking truth, and some of it to propagating error.' On the face of it, peace of mind demands a coherent will. The will must be doing what it wants to do—be it good or evil—if it is to be unconscious of hindrance.[1]

3. Finally, notice the ascending refinement in the black catalogue of expulsions: 'wickedness, guile, hypocrisies, envies, evil speakings!' The list ranges from thick, sodden, compact wickedness up to unkindly speech. We are so to grow in our Divine appreciation that we repel just as strongly the gilded forms of sin as we do those that savour of the exposed and noisome sewer. The taste of grace implies the 'putting away' of sin, the cleansing of the individual. Is the cleansing essential? Let us lay this down as a primary axiom in the science of life—there can be no vital communion between the unclean. Why, we cannot do a bit of successful soldering unless the surfaces we wish to solder are vigorously scraped of all their filth.

¶ In the domain of surgery, one of the greatest discoveries of the last fifty years has been the discovery of dirt, and the influence which it has exercised as the minister of severance and alienation. It has been found to be the secret cause of inflammation, the hidden agent in retarded healing, the subtle worker in embittered wounds; and now surgical science insists that all its operations be performed in the most scrupulous cleanliness, and its intensified vigilance has been rewarded by pure and speedy healings and communions. It is not otherwise in the larger science of life. Every bit of uncleanness in the individual is a barrier to family communion. All dirt is the servant of alienation. It is essential, if we would have strong and intimate fellowships, that every member be sweet and clean. 'Therefore put away' all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, and by purified surfaces let us prepare ourselves for spiritual communion.[1]

[1] H. Begbie, *Life Changers*, 41.

Coming.

1 Pet. ii. 4.—'Unto whom coming.'

THERE is a whole gospel in that word 'coming.'

1. There is the first coming to Christ of the soul which has discovered itself in conviction of sin, and has come to realize that the one pardon, the one peace, the one safety, the one shelter from the lightning of Eternal Holiness aggrieved, is Jesus; that there is no other refuge to go to but the crucified Christ; no other answer to the accuser but 'Jesus died.'

Then there is the continued coming of the believer, who wants spiritual strength, power, and victory, against the devil, the world, and the flesh. The secret for that great gift also is to come to Jesus; there alone is the Divine talisman of victory.

¶ A dear and honoured friend of mine, at Keswick, long ago, as we were talking together about the work of God, and especially thinking how to help young men fiercely tempted to go wrong as to purity, described to me his experience. 'God kept me in my young days' (they were the young days of a very vigorous man), 'He kept me clean all through; and this is how He did it. The devil whispered often to my heart: sin is sweet; other young men sin; why not you? Then something moved me always to shut my eyes, and say to myself, in my soul, 'Jesus Christ.' As I pronounced the blessed name, the temptation seemed dead under my feet and the tempter gone.' So the man came and came again, for power and victory over evil, to the living Rock, and he found himself 'a rock' through the Rock which had touched him and given Itself to him; so, even so, he was more than conqueror.[2]

2. The Apostle's language means coming and coming again to Christ. In the Greek,

[1] J. H. Jowett.
[2] H. C. G. Moule, *Christ and the Christian*, 39.

'coming' is expressed not in the past form of the participle, but in the present. It indicates therefore not a coming once done, a completed act, as if it referred only to our initial approach to Him in a definite conversion. It indicates a coming which is always to be done, and done again, a series and process. It points to a use of the Lord which can be illustrated in a measure by our perpetually repeated comings to the vital atmosphere around our bodies, to take in its virtue all the day, breath by breath.

¶ It is not often, it may be thought, that a point of grammar sheds a spiritual light, but it does so here. The Greek word used by St. Peter for 'coming' is cast into a verbal form which implies not a single, solitary, isolated arrival, as when a hunted fugitive takes refuge in a castle, once for all. The inflection of the word here implies repetition, continuity. It signifies a coming again, a coming always, a coming (shall I say?) almost with the instinctive frequency with which we draw our breath; certainly with the continuous regularity with which, on the whole, we take our food. It suggests our incessantly coming to the Rock for strength, and to the Life for life, asking Him every day to begin with us again. What I find in my own latter days, more and more, is that the one way, certainly for me, is every day to beseech the Lord to begin His processes of mercy, as to their essence, over again; again to show the soul its need, again to show it His power to save, and then again to let in the life-stream of His indwelling Self upon the springs of thought and will; to make Himself again, as if never before, the Lord of both the joys and the sorrows of the life He has given. Lay it thankfully to heart. This is what we are invited to do. It is the word of the Apostle who knew so well about it himself. He came to Jesus, not only first, in obedience to the first great call; he realized that he must be coming to Him always, that he must meet His Master again, continually, and throw himself afresh at His feet and upon His heart.[1]

3. This coming, which is here laid as the basis of all Christian prosperity and progress for the individual and for the community, is the movement towards Christ of the whole spiritual nature of a man—thoughts, loves, wishes, purposes, desires, hopes, will. And we come near to Him when day by day we realize His nearness to us, when our thoughts are often occupied with Him, when we bring His peace and Himself to bear as a motive upon our conduct, when we let our love reach outits tendrils towardsand twine around Him, when we bow our wills to His commandment, and in everything obey Him. The distance between heaven and earth does part us, but the distance between a thoughtless mind, an unrenewed heart, a rebellious will and Christ sets between Him and us a greater gulf, and we have to bridge that by continual honest efforts to keep our wayward thoughts true to Him and near Him. We have to regulate our affections that they may not, like runaway stars, carry us far from the path; we have to bow our stubborn and self-regulating wills beneath His supreme commandment, and so make all things a means of coming nearer the Lord with whom is our true home.

Expecting Him my door was open wide:
Then I looked round
If any lack of service might be found,
And saw Him at my side:—
How entered, by what secret stair,
I know not, knowing only He was there.[1]

The Stone and the Stones.

1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.—'To whom coming, as unto a living stone . . . ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house.'

St. Peter is addressing his disciples of the scattered Asian missions, but he is addressing us also to-day. For these apostolic letters, unique vehicles of revelation, informal, friendly, shaped and phrased (as we now well know) precisely in the form and dialect of the common correspondence of their time, are yet the word of God which abideth for ever, contemporary with every date. The writer is telling those Asiatics then, and ourselves now, what is the formative power for the full

[1] H. C. G. Moule, *Christ and the Christian*, 40.

[1] T. E. Brown, *Old John*, 181.

Christian life, the complete Christian character in action, strong but tender, humble but prevailing, immovable in principle and purpose yet open as the air to all pure sympathies and all generous service. For such a growth the type must be the Christ, the perfect Man, the more than realization in manhood of its supreme ideal of blended power and love. Yet more, the Christ must be the life, the victory of His followers. The dynamic behind their ethic, their power alike to achieve and to serve, is their Lord, their Saviour, personal and present, accessible to their spirits' use.

Him first, then, Peter denotes and describes. He is the Living Stone. This is a pregnant designation. We find our Master often figured as the Rock, the Stone of the Corner. We find Him often revealed as the very Life, 'Christ which is our life.' Here the two ideas converge into one magnificent and gracious mystery—the Living Stone.

1. *The Stone* comes first to our thought. The word suggests all that is massive, ponderous, steadfast. The reference, no doubt, touches especially the *angulare fundamentum*, the vast block of the corner, clamping wall into wall as they meet beside it and upon it. This is a parable for all that is inflexible, for truth, changeless in everlasting rectitude, able almightily to resist and to sustain. Before us in this great word is revealed the Christ as the mighty One in the moral battle, living always, as we see Him in the Gospels, at the utmost height of more than heroic virtue, never for a moment doubtful of Himself, never afraid of any foe, till in the last tremendous ordeal He not only endures the Cross, with a transcendent firmness always more wonderful as we ponder it, but despises the shame, with a scorn such as only the sublimest spirit could pour upon degrading wrong. And He, the Stone, is the same to-day and for ever, in this moral might of His. Cliffs and crags may suggest His fixity, yet all the while what are they beside it but fleeting shadows, unsubstantial dreams?

2. But then upon the other hand this Christ, in Peter's faith, is *the Stone that lives*. Here, as often in the vivid richness of the Bible, the imagery bursts the bounds of Nature. It gives us a rock instinct with a glowing consciousness of love. This mass of power, 'foursquare to opposition'—we look at it again. It is not it but He. He, the Stone, has heart, and eyes, and arms, and voice. He lives, all over and all through; His life pours itself out to the refugee beneath Him in tenderness, as when a mother comforteth; in a compassion which does not so much condescend as share; in a matchless fellowship with weakness, with sorrow, with remorse; in an embracing fondness over the little child; in a magnetic pardoning kindness for the damaged wanderer of the street; in that skill of the experienced sufferer which can touch into joy the broken heart.

¶ The more we know of the temptations without, the more shall we be conscious, day by day and hour by hour, how weak we are in ourselves; and therefore how we need the strong One whom we have in Jehovah-Jesus. Oh, the preciousness that we have not to do with a *dead* Christ! Though He was crucified and put into the grave on account of our numberless transgressions, yet He rose from the dead, He ascended on high, and there at the right hand of God He is, for us who put our trust in Him, as the Living One, as the Mighty One, who takes delight and joy continually in helping us amidst all our weaknesses and frailties.[1]

3. But the Apostle has not done. He has more to say, and of the same kind. The Living Stone is one, absolutely and by itself. But there are *many living stones*. We have looked at the supreme character of the Christ of God, upon the greatness that glows with goodness, upon the rock that beats with an eternal love. Well, that character, we gather here, is in some sort and measure communicable. For the Apostle has hardly named the Living Stone, elect and precious, before his pen, almost in the same stroke, writes down the words, 'Ye also, as living stones.'

Take the two elements of the metaphor in turn, as we took them just now with reference to the Lord.

[1] *The Life of George Müller*, 371.

(1) The disciple can be in some measure, like his Master, *a stone*, a rock. He can, out of whatever weakness, be made strong for God. Be his natural inconstancy what it may, he can become a stone of strength, solid, 'sincere on virtue's side,' steadfast with a persistency of dutiful conduct which stays and does not fail in the march of life. Conscience and will can somehow converge and embrace each other in him; and the resultant amalgam is a character which invites reliance, and fortifies, in all who touch it, every right resolve.

This character is indeed no dream. It was a fact of experience for these disciples of St. Peter, these men and women lately steeped in surroundings of Levantine vice. They were actually living stones in the judgment of the old Apostle. It was a fact two generations later, in the view of a keen outside observer, the non-Christian Aristides, in his Appeal (rediscovered in our time) to the Emperor to stay the persecutions. For the *morale* of the Christians' life, he says, personal, domestic, social, commercial, is what the world has never seen before, and the world must hail it now as its best hope. Aye, it has been a fact all down the centuries; it is a fact to-day. He can be solid, with a quiet purpose for right which reveals no hollowness. He can be stable, with a persistency of dutiful conduct which is utterly different, different as day from dark, from the attitude of the Pharisee, but which stays and lasts. He can be steady as a rock itself to resist and to shame temptation, and equally steady, if need be, to be leaned upon with strong reliance by a friend in moral danger. He can stand alone. He is not the poor slave of drifts and fashions of opinion and practice. Conscience and will have somehow coalesced within him, and the compound is a rock of quiet character which by no means slights popularity, but is never ruled by it for an hour.

(2) Then take the adjective—He is 'a *living* stone.' He is not too good (if there be such a goodness at all) to be profoundly alive with the life of human sympathy, human insight, human affections, a life which unobtrusively cares for and is at the service of the lives around him. The living stone is no such unhappy being that he can say, that he can think, of others: I am holier than thou. At his Lord's feet, in his Lord's heart, he has found an absolute corrective to such moral falsehood. Out of nature he has been taken into grace. But then by grace he has been led back into a purified nature; he is natural, with a quick readiness for every wholesome and honest sympathy; immovable in principle, unchangeable in every duty of the friend. Such is the Christian as a living stone, a noble ideal—an ideal meant to be realized, to be incarnated, in each and every one of ourselves. This man has been; this man can be.

¶ Why be a Christian? Because goodness is the crown of human life, overtopping genius and glory and everything else of high price, and the Christian is the highest style of man, goodness at its best. Men are proud to be 'capped' for degrees, to win some badge of public honour, to be noted for their cleverness or their success, to be remarked as cultured 'gentlemen.' But to be 'Christian,' to be sealed of the tribe of Jesus—that is the greatest of all sublime things, the distinction calculated to make us most humbly proud and everlastingly glad. No honour equal to this—despite imperfect Christians. When we ponder and realize what it signifies for this life and the rising range of the life to come, we know that this is the name above every name. No matter what banter clever tongues may indulge in at the expense of the professionals of piety, the human heart on every side pays homage to the sterling Christian character. In all your life, in all the world, you can be nothing higher than a Christian.[1]

A Living Stone.

1 Pet. ii. 4.—'A living stone.'

Jesus had taken this name to Himself, and had also given it to Simon. He, of the unsettled nature, was hailed as 'Peter,' a stone, steadfast and at rest on the very Rock. Now, as he writes, he is so taken with the symbol, that he sees his Lord as, not only a foundation

[1] R. E. Welsh, *Man to Man*, 206.

stone, but also as a corner-stone, a copestone, a stone over which men fall, and a rock against which they dash themselves to death. His words lead us to think of still other stones that might represent what he says of his Lord.

1. Christ is the *Loadstone* to draw us. Because of the magnetic iron in certain kinds of stone, they attract any object in which there is iron. The great Rock of which Peter is writing exerts this mysterious influence. Stone after stone in the neighbourhood is disturbed, and drawn, and held. Tier rises on tier, wall is joined to wall, and at last a noble house stands clear against the sky.

Centuries ago, men, in their zeal for God, did sometimes plan a place of worship so vast and fine that it could not be finished in their time. Generation followed generation and still the pile grew in bulk and grace. God himself is Architect and Builder of the one true temple. In silence it springs from the Living Rock. Wider, higher, grander it rears itself as the years grow into ages, and the ages bring on the end of time.

God-built, it is nevertheless built of common stones, stained, indeed, and splintered. Each stone is a person. Each person has felt the influence of The Person. The Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, has a power of attraction such as can belong to no one else. He has all the glories of Godhood, and all the excellencies of Manhood. His love, true and full, wooes love. His goodness, perfect and changeless, compels homage. His pity and mercy and help, given so freely and at such a cost, stir gratitude and self-surrender. His is, indeed, the supreme power to draw attention, to draw confidence, to draw loyalty.

'To whom coming,' self after self finds not only rest, but life. No sooner do they touch the Stone that has won them than they are transformed. They become stone of that Stone.

2. Christ is the *Marchstone* to check us. As we cross country we may come on a squared and lettered stone set in the ground. Although there is no break in the expanse of moor, the stone lets us know that here is the march between one district and another; and a step may carry us into forbidden ground.

To us, who are the people of God, and who have our own place in His realm, Christ is such a token of where we are and of where we should not go. Nor are we without the need of it. We have an inborn curiosity that prompts us to overpass boundaries and have new experiences; and we have also a longing for many things on the other side of purity and righteousness.

Our eyes spy out the forbidden land, and what we see fans our desire to enter. Some of our company are there already, and some are on the way, and we are vexed that we do not feel free to join them. We, who had deliberately withdrawn ourselves from that region of malice and guile and hypocrises and envies and evil speakings, would fain step back for a time, and let our old nature have a little of its own way. We, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, would also taste the pleasures of sin. In such a mood our feet have carried us, as by an evil spirit in them, to the very edge of the alien land. There, however, the sight of the Marchstone stays us. Unlike a common boundary-mark, placed where line joins line, this Living Stone confronts us wherever we may reach the border. The Christ in person intervenes. Not, indeed, that we see Him barring our way with outstretched hands. Such a vision we might brush aside as a trick of our nerves. No less does He deal directly with us.

As Spirit in our spirit, He so acts on our heart and mind that we do see where we are and how we are going. If still we hold on our way, we do so in defiance of our Lord and Lover. We choose to pass Him, and leave Him, and put Him to grief. We go from Him and from home.

3. Christ is the *Touchstone* to test us. By a black jasper or the like they were wont to try gold. The stone was rubbed against the metal and the colour of the mark showed the purity or the amount of alloy.

Christ, as no other, led those whom He met to declare themselves. The Pharisee drew near, respectable and pious, and by his bearing

toward the Holy One he showed himself to be unholy. The Publican on the skirt of the crowd listened to Jesus, and heard God, and became a child of God.

It is thus that every hour and all the world over the judgment proceeds. As the Christ is seen and heard, the deepest in the spirit is reached, and the will is moved. The self turns to Him in adoration or turns from Him in aversion.

Let me, then, judge myself, that I may know for certain what I am. I enter the sacred Presence, I look on the Face in which shines the glory of God. I let my eyes fall to the Feet which walked our earth on ceaseless errands of pity. I fix my gaze on the welcoming Hands scarred with the wounds of my sin. I bring myself and my Lord into touch. I recognize that His heart is toward me, and that His dearly wrought salvation is offered to me. Have I no stirring of gratitude, no uprising of trust, no yearning to accept His friendship and His promise to make me worthy of it? Therein I show that I am one with no genuine goodness and of no real worth. The life-eternal does not throb in me.

If, on the other hand, I am aware of a certain awe with a heart of joy in it; of a longing to be such as He is, and to be doing what He does; of an impulse to cast myself at His feet, then the life eternal has been born in me.[1]

For O the Master is so fair,
  His smile so sweet to banished men,
That they who meet it unaware,
  Can never rest on earth again.

And they who see Him risen afar,
  At God's right hand to welcome them,
Forgetful stand, of home and land,
  Desiring fair Jerusalem.

Living Stones.

1 Pet. ii. 5.—'Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house.'

1. The purpose of St. Peter was to console the early Christians for the loss of the Temple service. We can only with difficulty realize how great a wrench it must have been for them to separate themselves from a hallowed past. In view of the transcendent results of the Christian faith in all the world, it may appear to have been easy for these first Christians to give up all for the sake of the Master. But try for a single moment to re-create the position, and you will see how overwhelming must have been the sacrifice. It is not easy to break with one's past. It is not easy to give up old ideals and entertain new conceptions. These early Christians felt, doubtless, at times as if the land had slipped from beneath their feet, and as if they had been launched on some unknown sea. There is always something that is attractive in the solid and in the material. It is there. You can see it. It is not in the clouds. But this new religion they had espoused had no such solid attractions. There were no outward buildings to awaken their admiration; there was no retinue of priests to command their homage.

¶ It is a suggestive fact that many of the greatest buildings in the world have been erected through the influence of the religious sentiment. The temples of ancient Egypt are unique in their architecture. Travellers who have visited Karnak and Denderah confess to feelings of astonishment, and even of awe, as they have contemplated their majestic ruins. They are still, in their outward decay, the silent witnesses to the power of religious emotion in the far-off years. They teach us that the Egyptians, even before the advent of the Christian era, considered that no building was adequate to express the depth and meaning of that mystery that lies behind all life.

Even in eras with which we are more familiar the desire to express our reverence for the Unseen in outward material forms has been remarkable. The Temple of Solomon was the embodiment of Jewish veneration, and dates as a landmark in the history of mankind. The order of Freemasons, which is now world-wide, is identified with the history of that building. The foundations, which are still in existence, and on which the present Mosque of Omar has been built, are dear to every Jew. It is under the shadow of these foundations

[1] D. Burns.

that the Jews meet every Friday to weep over the departed glory of their nation. The temple of Solomon in its original features must have been massive and sublime, and has left an indelible impression on all our modern ideas of worship.

During the Christian era the greatest creations of architectural genius are to be found in the Gothic cathedrals. Froude has said with truth, 'The Gothic cathedral is perhaps on the whole the most magnificent creation which the mind of man has yet thrown out of itself.' Anyone who has seen York Minster or the shrine of St. Cuthbert at Durham, or who has stood and gazed on Cologne Cathedral—that wonder of the Rhine—will be inclined to agree with him.[1]

2. But the Apostle gives to the outward material conception that had been so dear to these Asiatic Christians an inner spiritual meaning. 'Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' The new temple was to be spiritual and not material. The stones of that temple were to be living men and women.

No building, however beautiful and impressive it may be in its outward form, can be said to be the true church of God. The material prosperity of a church is not always an index of its spiritual growth. It has often been during seasons of persecution, when the Church, denuded of her outward possessions and falling back upon the spiritual forces that underlie her very existence—it has often been under such conditions that the Church has changed the destiny of nations. The very effort at material aggrandizement is attended with a subtle danger. We can never forget that it was when Leo the Tenth was adorning the Vatican, and carrying out his vast schemes for the building of St. Peter's in Rome, that the Reformation began in Germany. It was then that God called a peasant monk to rebuke the material corruptions of his age.

If, therefore, we are to profit by the lessons of the past, we must not in any mere admiration of the material overlook the claims of the spiritual. We ourselves must be the living stones.

3. It is these 'living stones' that are so essential. When we wish to denote a man of intense energy, we sometimes speak of him as a 'live man'—that is, a living man, a man who exerts a positive influence. And that is the conception that is conveyed in the text. These converts were to be living men and women. Every one of them was to count for something. Their energy was creative. They were not content to live upon the past. They had new ideas, new conceptions of life altogether; and by their intense vitality they were able to project their ideas throughout the succeeding centuries.

This is the conception of the Christian Church that is embodied in this Epistle. We are called to contemplate not a stately building in which Divine worship may be celebrated, but a living assemblage of men and women possessed of the spirit of the Master. Wherever you have the two or the three met in the name of Christ and seeking to do His will, there you have the true Church. First you must have the spiritual, and afterwards the material. The material has value only in so far as it is the outward visible expression of the deeper religious emotions of the soul. It was the gatherings of men and women throughout the Roman empire, sometimes meeting in each other's dwellings, and more frequently in buildings of the most primitive kind, that formed the nuclei of those Churches that were to arise in the succeeding centuries, and whose influence has gone forth into all the world. Christianity did not drop down from the sky. It was a growth. It took its rise under conditions that were devoid of prestige of any kind. No provision was made for its teachers. No buildings were provided in which they were to minister. There was simply the living fire in the hearts of the men and women who had known its power. It constrained them to break with the traditions of the past, and to enter into a daily protest against the current ideals of their age. Such were the beginnings of the Christian faith.

[1] J. Lamond.

We say it is Divine. The word 'Divine' is scarcely strong enough. There is nothing like it in the history of mankind. It baffles all explanation. It was as the grain of mustard-seed which is less than all seeds, but which has become as the Tree of Life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

¶ Jesus did not organize the Kingdom of God on earth. He did not frame a legal constitution for it. He did not propose to establish it by means of revolutions and upheavals. He did not set Himself to overlay with its culture the civilization which it would eventually supplant.

For the Kingdom of God is everywhere and always and only *a life*, an individual life and a common life. It grows, it progresses, it evolves. . . .

Jesus had an unwavering faith in the energy of one germ of living life, given its chance, to propagate more life, to displace mountains of resistance, even to plant trees in the depths of the sea! It was in this faith that He worked: the great problems of human need were dealt with indirectly, either by the example of His own practice, or by some significant act, or by a suggestive word left to work its way into regions apparently unconnected with it. If only His followers had always evinced His faith in *life!* [1]

Priesthood.

1 Pet. ii. 5.—'Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood.'

Speaking of the whole company of redeemed and believing men and women, the Apostle Peter calls them 'a holy priesthood.' That is his designation, not of any special class among them, but of them all without exception, however humble, obscure and ungifted they might be. And in calling them so, he was evidently alluding to the priesthood of Old Testament times. Then the priests were a special class, but now the holy priesthood embraces all alike. All are consecrated and set apart to serve.

We shall never be able to get rid of false ideas about priesthood unless we can make this idea of the priesthood of all Christians mean something more to us than the mere assertion that in Christianity there are no priests at all. For this idea of priesthood still appeals to the imagination; we must find out what there is in it that is attractive to the highest minds if we would fight successfully against the narrow caricatures and grotesque misapplications to which it is liable. What, then, is really implied in the idea of a priest? It is difficult to sum up in a phrase all that is implied in so complex and so shifting a conception; but perhaps we may lay it down that in ordinary usage the three essential ideas connected with priesthood are: (1) Sacrifice or Worship; (2) Mediation; (3) Service.

1. *Sacrifice.*—The Christian is a member of a holy priesthood, and therefore he leads a separated life. There are things that are lawful for him, but he must sacrifice them because he has a special task and occupies an advanced position. There is almost infinite capacity for sacrifice in humanity, so much so that men will sacrifice themselves for a bad cause rather than not at all, and women will sacrifice themselves to the destruction of others, if they cannot do it to their salvation. And, deeper than any act by which we sacrifice, there must be the offering of the will, a mystical self-dedication, which keeps the motives clear and makes all the difference to the benefit it brings. It is primarily our dedication to God that concerns us, for in the end that will mean the most lasting service for man. It is not enough merely to desire to serve man. That has poured forth service, often without result, sometimes only for evil. Our worship is designed to give us opportunity for this very thing. Then, when it is translated into action it is spontaneous, and the sense of making a sacrifice, which can become quite morbid or proud, is taken away. The Christian is never conscious of making any sacrifice. This is why the sacrifice the Christian priesthood offers is called a sacrifice of thanksgiving. That does not mean only that it consists of hymns and grateful prayers:

[1] Annie H. Small, *The Kingdom and the King*, 72.

but it is a sacrifice of thanksgiving because we acknowledge gratefully the great benefits of Christ's sacrifice for us. And it is done with thanksgiving because we have found the sacrifice of ourselves to be a thing of supreme joy.

From this day onward Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine,
From this day on.

My food I'll get in serving Thee;
Thy thoughts shall be as eyes to me.
I'll live and breathe to sing Thy praise
From this time onward all my days.
Thy feet I choose, the world resign,
For Thou, from this day on, art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine!

To Thee I offer child and wife,
My home and all my worldly life;
To Thee this body, too, I bring,
To Thee surrender everything.
My very self henceforth is Thine.
O take it, Lord, for Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine!

My thoughts and words are all of Thee,
Thou—Wisdom, Joy and Liberty.
Now Thee and me no rift can part,
One not in semblance but in heart.
Set free am I and for me shine
The joys of heaven, since Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine!

From this day onward Thou art mine,
Brother beloved and King divine,
From this day on.[1]

2. *Mediation.*—The priest is a mediator. We are taught by the New Testament that all members of the Christian communion are mediators. Now to say that all are mediators is not the same thing as to say that in Christianity there are no mediators. In Christianity there are no mediators, if by mediation is meant the existence of a special order of men without whose assistance access to God is denied to the individual soul—a special order of men without whose leave God cannot be revealed to man, or man approach God. Nevertheless, it is profoundly true that no man can approach God except through the help of his fellow-men. It is only by entering into the social consciousness (as it were) that the individual acquires any religious or moral ideas whatever. No one of us would know anything about God or about duty, but for what he learns from his fellow-men. Conscience itself is in a sense the creation of society, though it is none the less true that society is the creation of individual consciences. And it is not merely by teaching that one individual may communicate to another the knowledge of God. Man is a mediator of God to his fellow-men in a higher sense than that. For the highest idea that we can form of God is derived from what we know of man at his best. Thus what we call the mediation of Christ is the supreme instance of a universal principle of the religious life. By showing us Humanity at its highest, Christ has been, and remains, the supreme Mediator between God and man.

¶ When Stanley came in from the racketing world and 'found' Livingstone at Ujiji, they had quite a lot of 'talking the sun up.' . . . As those faggots flare by the camp fires, Stanley, night after night, is bound by the spell of salvation. Livingstone seemingly is so eminently one of Christ's men that Stanley can believe there is a Christ because there is a Livingstone. 'Here is,' writes Stanley, 'a man who is manifestly sustained as well as guided by influences from Heaven. The Holy Spirit dwells in him: God speaks through him. The heroism, the nobility, the pure and stainless enthusiasm at the root of his life came beyond question from Christ. There must, therefore, be a Christ, and it is worth while to have such a Helper and Redeemer as this Christ undoubtedly is, as He reveals Himself in this wonderful disciple.'[1]

3. *Service.*—There remains the idea of service. The priest is one who is bound in a special and peculiar sense to the service of his fellow-men. No doubt this side of priesthood is a conception so purely ethical that it

[1] Translated from the Marathi of N. V. Tilak.

[1] Dan Crawford, *Back to the Long Grass*, 115.

can hardly be said to be very prominent in the early and cruder form of priesthood as it existed in primitive human societies, except in so far as the priest was a person who had special powers of doing things for his fellow-man which he could not do for himself—approaching the god, revealing his will, helping men to find their lost property, and so on. But it is found in connection with the priesthood of all higher religions. And under the influence of Christianity, even when the conception of priesthood is still largely coloured by the older Jewish, or even the pagan, idea of it, the service of one's fellow-men—general spiritual service, as one may call it, apart from the specialized service of some particular profession or calling—has come to be more and more an essential element in the idea of priesthood. It is this that makes the ideal of the priestly life attractive to so many of the highest minds. The New Testament doctrine of the universal priesthood of Christians is after all (in its highest meaning) only an assertion of the essence of Christian Ethics, the law of mutual service.

Now, each call, each claim is honour; labour joy, and work delight,
Every humblest task a gladness, wrought for love, as in God's sight.
And t'encourage, cheer and comfort weary ones, and those distrest,
Doth the love of Christ constrain us, in self-sacrifice most blest.
Opportunities so holy come in sorrow's darkest hours,
When, forgetting self, we enter into grief that is not ours.
Bearing one another's burdens, we His gracious Law fulfil,
Through the fellowship of suffering, learn the beauty of His Will.
And in doing, giving, loving, we may follow where He trod,
He who in the least was faithful, Very Man, and Very God.[1]

[1] Mary Hitchin-Kemp, *The Ideal of Sympathy*, 90.

Spiritual Sacrifices.

1 Pet. ii. 5.—'Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices.'

St. Peter declares that the difference between Jewish and Christian sacrifices is not one of degree but of kind; he says that the Christian sacrifice is distinguished from the Jewish sacrifice in that it is spiritual. Here is not merely a difference in intensity, but a difference of nature. The offerings of the Jew are said to be as distinct in their essence from the offerings of the Christian as is the constitution of matter from the constitution of spirit; and as St. Peter declares that the offerings of Christians have their root in the offering of Christ Himself, he places the sacrificial contrast on the very threshold of the new dispensation. There are three respects in which a material differs from a spiritual sacrifice.

1. The first is that, while the value of the material sacrifice lies in the thing given, the value of the spiritual offering consists in the will to give it. St. Peter declares that this principle of contrast was initiated in the life of Christ Himself: 'Ye are built up an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices by Jesus Christ.' Now it is not difficult to see that this phase of spiritual sacrifice has, indeed, its most powerful type in the experience of the Son of Man. There is a deep significance in the words ascribed to Him by the fourth Evangelist, 'I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' In a mere Judaic sense Christ had not yet glorified God on the earth; and still less had He finished the work which God had given Him. To the mind of a Jew it was a paradox to say that the sacrifice of life could be completed while life itself remained in the body; with him the goal of sacrifice was the physical death of the victim. But this is just the point at which the sacrifice of Christ took a new departure. He here declares, while He is yet in the body, that, in a deep and a profoundly true sense, His work is already done, His offering complete, His

self-surrender perfected. What is that sense? What is the thought in the heart of the Son of Man which leads Him, even before the Cross, to speak of the sacrifice of the Cross as an already accomplished fact? It is the experimental recognition of the truth that, when the will is given, the battle is already over; that, when a man has surrendered himself, he has in the deepest sense given up his life. Christ's spiritual sacrifice was perfected in the hour when He was able to say, 'Not as I will, but as thou wilt.' His material sacrifice—the offering up of His body—was still to come. But when the will had been surrendered the rest of the process was comparatively light. The great battle was fought in the heart; and when the victory in the heart had been won, the Son of Man could already say, 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.'

It is in this light that the great paradox of the Christian sacrifice becomes clear. From any materialistic standpoint it seems a contradiction in terms that the Son of Man, under the very shadow of the Cross, should bequeath to the world His peace, and offer mankind participation in His joy. Peace and joy would appear to be the last things compatible with a cross. But in the spiritual idea of sacrifice they are not only compatible, but crowning accompaniments. They constitute the very glory of the offering. They indicate that the offering has been purely voluntary, that it has come from the very heart of the giver, and has been given in the fullness of his heart. They tell us that the Son of Man has reached the goal of His own petition, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven'—acquiescingly, joyfully. The passive endurance has become an active ministration, and the submission to an inevitable law has been transfigured into the power of love.

Lord, it was hard to fight against the pricks,
Yet when I took them to my bosom, lo,
The briar from which these biting thorns
did grow,
Became Thy staff of love, and blossomed so,
That day by day my pain it doth o'ermix
With a sweet balm that healeth every woe.[1]

[1] Muriel E. George, *The Garden of Comfort*, 11.

2. A material and a spiritual sacrifice are not only different in the standard of their value; they differ also in the point of their commencement. A material sacrifice has its beginning in an act; a spiritual sacrifice has its beginning in a thought. And here, again, we shall find the type and origin of this sacrifice in the life of the Son of Man. The passage which most strikingly exhibits it in this aspect is Phil. ii. 6, where, in speaking of that process by which our Lord emptied Himself, St. Paul says, 'Who, being in the form of God, did not clutch at his equality with God.' What we have here specially to observe is that, in the view of St. Paul, the process of *kenosis*, by which our Lord emptied the Divine into the limits of the human nature, had its beginning in a thought. It originated, according to him, not in the earthly, but in the heavenly state. It began while the Son of Man was as yet in the form of God, in the state of pre-existent glory. It took its rise, not in an act, but in what we should humanly call a sentiment. It would almost seem as if St. Paul contemplated the Incarnation as having had its origin in a stage behind the infancy of Jesus, a stage of pre-existent love in which the Son of God contemplated the sorrows of the sons of men. The first stage of the Incarnation, in the Pauline view, seems to have been a phase of Divine sympathy. In a higher than any forensic sense He who was in the form of God, and while yet He was in the form of God, stooped to take the place of the sinner. He became the substitute for the world before He was manifested in the world; the beginning of His substitution was His sympathy. He took the place of the sinner in thought before He took it in fact. He emptied Himself sympathetically into the circumstances of the sons of men, conceived Himself to be in their place, imputed to Himself their needs and their surroundings. The sacrifice of Calvary had its origin in that spiritual process by which the Divine Logos began to identify His life with the life and the burdens of the world.

It is because Christ's sacrifice had its beginning in a sympathetic thought that our sacrifice may be like His. That likeness is

reached when we have begun to empty ourselves into sympathy with the lives and circumstances of others, to see with their eyes and to feel with their hearts. There comes a time in the life of all earnest souls when the full cup of personal enjoyment seems unworthy to be snatched at, when the voices of sorrow in the valley drown their own songs in the plain, and the remembrance of what others have lost makes them forgetful of their gains. That is the true spirit of the Christian *kenosis*. It is not yet a sacrificial act, but it is the root of all sacrificial action; nay, in one sense, it is more than any act can give; for it is the gift of the self, the charity of the thought, the sympathetic assumption of another's human life.

¶ A telegram, which announced that Lee was about to surrender, came to the White House in Washington during the stormy days of the Civil War. Abraham Lincoln left Washington immediately to go to the front, and when news finally had reached him that Lee had surrendered and the officials began to make preparation for the entry into Richmond, just as immediately Lincoln put his foot down and said, 'There shall be no triumphal entry into Richmond. There shall be no demonstration just now.' He made his way to Richmond and walked through the city alone. There never was such a triumphal entry as that in all the annals of history. He walked with his head down, with heavy step and sad heart, and when he reached the Southern capital and went to Jefferson Davis's room, he bade his two officials step aside and leave him alone. After a few minutes had passed by, one of them, out of curiosity, looked to see what had taken place, and there sat Lincoln, with his head bowed on Jefferson Davis's desk, his face in his hands and his tears falling. And I say that the angels of God never looked down from the battlements of heaven on a holier scene than that. His great sympathetic heart saved the Republic. That was the greatest victory in the Civil War, that settled the struggle, that bound the North and South together. . . . The greatest victory that is ever won on any battlefield of human life, in the hour when the struggle goes on, is won through the wonderful element that comes down from the heart of Jesus Christ—His own divine sympathy for struggling humanity.[1]

3. A material and a spiritual sacrifice are contrasted also in respect of their continuity or permanence. A material sacrifice is one which, by its very nature, demands constant repetition; a spiritual sacrifice, if it be a full expression of the heart, is offered once for all. This is the side of the subject on which the writer to the Hebrews has laid peculiar stress in his contrast between the old life and the new. In speaking of Christ as the true High Priest, he says: 'Who needed not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself.' The weak point of Judaism, in his view, is the fact that it has not 'a priest for ever.' Its priesthood can act only periodically, and, therefore, it does not operate continuously. It has certain times and seasons for sacrifice; but between these times and seasons there are intervals which can never be wholly accounted for. This priesthood, therefore, is deficient in the permanence of its sacrificial power; it is a priesthood only for stated days of life. But when the writer to the Hebrews turns to Christianity he finds, for the first time, a principle of sacrifice which is not periodical, but permanent; a principle whose operation is no longer limited to stated days, but is manifested in every minutest act of every hour. It is this contrast which he really aims to express in Heb. vii. 23, 24: 'And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.' So unchangeable to him is the priesthood of Christ that he is not afraid to regard it as transported beyond death, and existing in the state of glorification: 'We have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens.'

What, then, is this strange species of sacrifice which is permanent through life and through death, without being once repeated?

[1] Cortland Myers.

Its nature may be expressed in a single word—love. Love is not a series of sacrifices: it is a surrender of the spirit once for all; that is to say, it is a surrender which, in being once made, has been made for all emergencies and for all time. There are, doubtless, outward sacrifices which love has still to perform, but the great offering is the love itself. For—

His lone cross and crown of thorn
Endure when crowns and empires fall.
The might of His undying love
In dying conquered all.

Only by treading, in His steps,
The all-compelling ways of Love
Shall earth be won, and man made one
With that Great Love above.[1]

The Corner Stone.

1 Pet. ii. 6.—'Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone.'

In what sense is Christ a corner stone? He secures for us two things which we must secure if life is not to be a failure.

1. One is, *something certainly true*, a truth to stand by amid uncertainties. As we advance in our earthly journey, perplexities gather round on all sides: life has not verified our first expectations; it raises questions which it does not answer; there is a confusion and discord of theories. Where is that which we can depend upon and grasp firmly, looking life and death in the face? The answer is in the words of Jesus, 'I am the truth.' Men who had tasted of His fullness could tell their brethren that to believe on Him was to feel firm ground under their feet. And the experience of all these centuries bears witness to us that, whatever else is false, Christ is the truest of the true; that, if we trust Him, He will explain life to us—yes, and death also, and eternity. The Christian faith has Him, the living and personal Christ, for its Object; and His character is the most persuasive evidence of His religion. Thus, the Truth Incarnate into which all truths run up, He is the Foundation on which men craving for reality may build their lives without misgiving; they can say with St. Peter, 'We have believed and we know.'

¶ You speak of building your own platform, of putting together the facts of which you feel experimentally sure. You had much better take *Christ*, and make *Him* the corner-stone of your edifice. Christ is the only God, the only religion, the only life, which can satisfy souls like yours and mine. I realise it more every day.[1]

What is the point where himself lays stress?
Does the precept run 'Believe in good,
In justice, truth, now understood
For the first time?' or, 'Believe in me,
Who lived and died, yet essentially
Am Lord of Life?' Whoever can take
The same to his heart and for mere love's sake
Conceive of the love,—that man obtains
A new truth; no conviction gains
Of an old one only, made intense
By a fresh appeal to his faded sense.[2]

2. Man needs also *a power of moral and spiritual rectification*. He wants to be cleansed from his own unholiness, relieved of his own sense of guilt. Otherwise, he cannot build in peace; how should he? Life, to be worth having, must be life with a quiet conscience. To be sure, some men stifle this craving, or tell themselves that it is illusory or artificial, but the real genuine heart of human nature knows well that the burden of all burdens is the sense of sin without any assurance of anything that can take it away and enable the soul to live at peace with itself and with God. But from the garden and the Cross, and the sanctuary of heavenly mediation, comes the voice of Him who bore our sins in His own body: 'Come unto me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' Believers in Christ have found it. To them He is all-precious, because He can and does help them to become pure and single-hearted, high in aim, and active in duty.

[1] John Oxenham, *The Vision Splendid*, 96.

[1] *Edward C. Lefroy*, 29.
[2] Browning.

¶ In that remarkable book, *A Gentleman in Prison*, the poor Japanese criminal who is awaiting sentence of death but who has found Christ and forgiveness writes:—

At last my sins are revealed
And I sit here in prison.
My heart is filled with pain and sorrow,
And day by day I suffer without rest.
Is there a God? I cry,
But there is no answer,
And I am sunk in anguish.

Soon will the righteous judgment come upon me,
For my sins are fearful
Beyond comparison.
I am resolved to accept my doom,
But when the day of parting comes,
I must leave all I have behind me,
And there is nothing in the after world
To trust for peace of soul.

There is no day when I forget my agony.
Asleep or awake
My hand gropes
But reaches nowhere,
And I am almost mad.
My life has no meaning,
And my fear grows more and more
As I recall my sins.
What will the next world do to me?
My body is torn in pieces at the thought.
My pain and anguish
Grow greater every day
And I am sick with suffering.
Is there no wiping out of sins?
If there is a God who thinks of pity
I cry to Him in my anguish
'Listen to the prayer of my soul,
Take me to the Heavenly City
Where my soul shall not perish;
Make me to meet my beloved father and mother!'

Then joy is revealed to me.
'Behold! Christ is here; be not afraid!
You shall see your father and your mother,
And you shall be with them
In the City of God.
You shall not die,
But you shall live in glory,
And every day and all the days
You shall be glad.
You shall taste the joys
Your heart desires,
The pleasures that are beyond the world.'
To-day I have entered into the City.
My name is defiled,
My body dies in prison,
But my soul, purified,
To-day returns to the City of God.[1]

The Preciousness of Christ.

1 Pet. ii. 7.—'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.'

1. THE rarity of an article is one of the constituting causes of its value. The one last copy of a remarkable edition of a remarkable book; the one picture of a famous artist, who deviated, for once, from his ordinary style, and left behind him a singular and original production of his genius; the one gem which surpasses all other gems in size or brilliance, or even, it may be, in the peculiarity of its defects—these things, and such as these, are frequently the subject of an earnest and eager competition, and happy is the man considered to be who can succeed in making himself the possessor of the coveted prize. The diamond has a worth of its own, an intrinsic value. With its flashing and changing colours, it is, in itself, a most beautiful specimen of the great Creator's handiwork; but, were diamonds as common as the rounded pebbles on the seashore, the eagerness with which they are sought after would be greatly abated, for half their preciousness is derived from the circumstance that there are comparatively few of them anywhere for men to become possessed of. Rarity, then, makes a thing valuable. And, if so, how valuable must He be, whom the Scripture calls 'wonderful'; He who is the only begotten of the Father, the incarnate Son of God!

Perhaps it is not wrong to say that the God-man is a more wonderful, because a more

[1] *A Gentleman in Prison*, 93.

unique, Being in the universe than even God Himself? We cannot, of course, but be filled with wonder when we contemplate the perfections of Deity. His power, His wisdom, His vastness, inspire in us the profoundest possible awe. We think of His self-subsistence; that He is the great 'I am', the original fountain of life, uncaused Himself, yet causing all beside. We call to mind the astounding circumstance that He is present at the same moment of time at every spot of His illimitable creation—present here, for instance, and present also at that remotest star on the outposts of the universe whose light has not yet had time to reach our distant earth; and present not by influence merely, but present in all the awfulness of His personality, and in all the plenitude of His power. At the remembrance of these facts, for facts they are, we prostrate ourselves in lowliest adoration at the footstool of the eternal throne, and the cry of Moses goes up from our lips—'Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?' Yes, all this is wondrous! God is wondrous! But is there not something more wondrous still—at least, to our apprehension—in the combination presented to us in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ? Therewe have the infinitudeof the God and the finiteness of the man dwelling together. Power and frailty, majesty and meanness, brought into singular and unexpected coalition. The Ancient of days becoming an infant! He that stretched forth the heavens like a curtain, bound up in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger! In fact, God, in His fullness—associating Himself in mysterious and inseparable alliance with the limitations and infirmities and sufferings of our feeble humanity. And when we turn from the person to the work, there the selfsame strangeness, the selfsame uniqueness breaks upon our view. For we have the Lord of Life given over into the hands of wicked men and dying upon the Cross. We have the one innocent, immaculate Being among the children of men undergoing unexampled sorrows, and bending under the heavy load of the Divine indignation against sin. Surely, then, the rarity of the person and of the work of Christ is one of the causes which contribute to make Him 'precious.'

2. But just as the value of an object is in proportion to its costliness, that is to say, to the amount of time, or pains, or thought, or money, that has been expended upon it—just as a diamond, for instance, valuable in itself, and valuable too for its rarity, is more valuable still when it has passed through the lapidary's hands, and has been made fit to shine in the forefront of a royal crown—so is it with the Lord Jesus Christ. His 'preciousness' is enhanced by that training and discipline, that process of intellectual and spiritual preparation, which it was the Father's good will that He should be called upon to undergo. We believe, concerning the men of genius, the poets, the artists, the authors, the orators who have greatly influenced their fellow-men, that the circumstances of their lives were so ordered by Divine providence as to qualify them for the part they were destined to play in human affairs. How much more, then, must we feel this to have been the case with respect to the Incarnate Son of God? The importance of Him, not only to the race of man, but also to the whole universe, it were utterly impossible for language to describe. He is the centre to which everything converges, the pivot upon which everything turns, the nail fastened in a sure place upon which hangs the whole of the vast framework of the Divine administration. Had He failed to accomplish any one part of His appointed task it would have been like removing that grand central Sun round which, as some suppose, the other tributary suns, with their systems, perpetually revolve. Dislocation, confusion, ruin, would have been the inevitable result, and the whole beautiful order of the moral government of God would have been reduced to a hideous and almost unimaginable chaos.

¶ Had Christ not thrown himself heart and soul into the attempt to establish the kingdom of heaven, and found a great brotherhood of the sons of God, he might have lived happy and blameless in his Galilean home. And what would have been the result? He would have gained a few years of obscure and ignoble

comfort, and lost the permanent empire of the spiritual world. But now from the cross his love shines forth, stronger than pain and death, the one eternal power which nothing can subdue; and by that mighty magnet he is drawing all men to him.[1]

The Value of Christ.

1 Pet. ii. 7.—'For you therefore which believe is the preciousness.'

You will notice that the AV rendering, 'Unto you therefore who believe he is precious,' has been discarded in the Revised Version. It is not directly of Christ, but of the value of Christ as a corner or foundation stone that the Apostle is speaking. And those alone really know the value of the foundation who have made use of it and begun to build upon it. 'Unto you who believe is the value.'

Let us look at some of the gifts which, according to the testimony of Scripture and of human experience, Christ brings to the hearts of those who receive Him, some of the blessings that come to those who build upon Christ as a foundation-stone.

1. Christ reveals the Father. When we grope and stumble at the mystery of God, when we feel that 'the gods of the heathen are no gods,' and that scientific atheism leaves the greatest problems of the universe unsolved, the deepest yearnings of the spiritual soul unsatisfied, half our nature unaccounted for; when we cannot by any searching of our own find out God; when a thousand possibilities of ignorance and superstition torment us with vague and nameless fears; what a marvellous revelation of light and power of assurance it is when Jesus Christ puts before us His great teaching of God. With the strong confidence, and in the quiet ways of perfect knowledge, He tells us of the Father. 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him,' and His great revelation of Him is of Divine and tender Fatherhood.

¶ '*I am*——!'

'*I am*'——what?

For centuries and centuries that question stood unanswered, that sentence remains incomplete. It was a magnificent fragment. It stood like a monument that the sculptor had never lived to finish; like a poem that the poet, dying with his music in him, had left with its closing stanzas unsung. But the sculptor of *that* fragment was not dead; the singer of *that* song had not perished! For, behold, He liveth for evermore! And, in the fullness of time, He reappeared and filled in the gap that had so long stood blank.

'*I am*——!'

'*I am*'——what?

'I am—*the Bread of Life!*' 'I am—*the Light of the World!*' 'I am—*the Door!*' 'I am—*the True Vine!*' 'I am—*the Good Shepherd!*' 'I am—*the Way, the Truth, and the Life!*' 'I am—*the Resurrection and the Life!*'[1]

2. Christ releases men from the burden of their own guilty and shameful past. 'Who shall deliver me from this dead body?' cried St. Paul. And he answered his own question; 'Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' 'There is now no condemnation,' he says in another place, 'to them that are in Christ Jesus.' And Paul's experience is the experience of innumerable multitudes since his day. They come to Jesus haunted and tortured by guilt and shame, and He heals all their diseases, He forgives all their iniquities. He says to them as to those He healed and blessed when here on earth, 'Son, daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee.' These are the people who know the 'value.' They have themselves been lifted up out of the horrible pit and the miry clay and have had their feet set upon a rock and their goings established, and ever after their faces shine at the bare thought of Christ, and when they think of Him they say with adoring hearts: 'He is a great Forgiver.' Do we know the 'value' of the pardon and peace faith brings? Have we experienced it? We never shall know it

[1] J. Drummond, *Johannine Thoughts*, 132.

[1] F. W. Boreham, *Rubble and Roseleaves*, 242.

until we come ourselves to Jesus to be forgiven. 'To you that believe is the value.'

¶ Here lies the knot and centre of Gospel forgiveness. It flows from the cross, and springs out of the grave of Christ. . . .

Pardon comes not to the soul alone; or rather, Christ comes not to the soul with pardon only. It is that which he opens the door and enters by, but he comes with a spirit of life and power.[1]

3. Christ gives men strength in view of the temptations and difficulties of the present. 'I can do all things,' says St. Paul, 'through Christ which strengtheneth me.' He had fearful difficulties to face, fierce temptations to meet, seas of sorrow to bear, but he trusted Christ, put all his faith in Christ, and this is his testimony—he overcame through Christ. St. Paul knew the 'value' of Christ. He had tried Him in the shocks and conflicts of life. And multitudes endorse his testimony. They have found the comfort of Christ in sorrow; they have received the succour of Christ in times of difficulty; they have experienced the strength of Christ in the hour of temptation. They know what Christ has done, they know His 'value.' Do we know the 'value' of Christ in temptation and sorrow and difficulty? Have we experienced His sufficient help, His enabling grace? 'The Lord is able to deliver the godly out of temptation.' Yes, the Lord is able, but we shall never know His saving power until we ask Him to deliver and keep us. Then, as the Lord reveals to us the wealth of His redeeming and comforting grace, we shall begin to appreciate His worth. 'To you that believe is the value.'

¶ We speak of the steadiness of veterans, of men being inured, of the *morale* of an army; and what we mean is that success after success in the past, and victory upon victory, give confidence in the issues of to-day and the days to come. Still further, a great general who has carried his army successfully through campaigns gives them assurance in a contest against any foe. Now, in the Christian life, experience of what Christ has done in the past gives them assurance of what He will do in the future. A Christian's assurance is not in himself so much as in the Spirit which is within him. There is such a thing as the assurance of the craftsman who, through many years of careful work, has built up a skill in hand and eye and brain on which he can now count when a new piece of work is placed before him. It is not self-conceit which leads him to say: 'I can do it.' He *knows* he can. So does the practised Christian know that his strength came in earlier days from the presence of Christ within him, and that He will not fail him now.[1]

4. Christ fills men with radiant hope even in face of death. 'To die is gain,' says the Apostle. 'He which raised up the Lord Jesus,' he says in another place, 'shall raise up us also with Jesus.' 'Henceforth there is laid up for me,' he says in yet another place, 'a crown of righteousness.' St. Paul knew the value of Christ. Christ filled him with such a glorious and blessed hope that he was able to mock at death and triumph over the grave. And thousands upon ten thousands have been able to do what St. Paul did. They have been able to greet the unseen with a cheer. They have tested the worth of Christ in face of man's last foe.

¶ You remember, perhaps, the touching story of Cromwell's dying. A godly person read to him a passage from Philippians. 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am therein to be content,' read the minister. 'It is true,' murmured Cromwell, 'Paul learned this and attained to this measure of grace, but what shall I do?' Then the minister read on: 'I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me,' and at that faith began to work, says the chronicler, and his heart found courage, and he said this to himself: 'He that was Paul's Christ is my Christ, too'; and death ceased to have any fears for him. And for many another since Cromwell's day. I have been with many a pilgrim right to the very edge of the river. I have been with them when their feet have touched its waters. And

[1] *The Golden Book of John Owen*, 122.

[1] G. Stephen, *The Warp and the Woof*, 23.

they have entered those waters without trepidation or dread. They have entered them with singing hearts and shining faces. They have had Christ with them. These people who have believed in Him, they have found His value. He has given them hope and triumph in the very hour of death.[1]

¶ Catherine Marsh, in a letter to Mr. Gladstone, writes of her visit to a dying friend.

'As I went into her room early in the morning of the last day she spent on earth, she said with a quiet rapture of tone and countenance, "Before nightfall I shall be with the Lord Jesus, I shall see the King in His beauty." When her mother repeated to her the Psalmist's words, "Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil," she replied, "There are no shadows here, dearest mother, it is all sunshine." And to me she said with her pleasant smile, "I shall tell John Bunyan that he made a mistake. No river, no flood, no waters! My Saviour is lifting me over the narrow line which divides me from His Living glorious Presence."

I wish *you* had seen her. It was all so real, so simple, so natural—and she looked like a young Queen, crowned with her golden hair—and her eyes filled with a sort of victorious happiness. "More than a conqueror through Him that loved her." '[2]

A Fourfold Calling.

1 Pet. ii. 9.—'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.'

Looking at these four things, we see that they represent four different aspects of the Christian A chosen generation—that tells about a new life. A royal priesthood—that tells about a new service. An holy nation—that tells about a new relationship to the world. A peculiar people—that tells about a new relationship to God.

1. *A chosen generation.*—If we adopt the Revised reading we shall have a better and more exact rendering of the Apostle's thoughts. Instead of 'chosen generation' we then read 'an elect race.' This was the central idea in the history of the Hebrew people, and in the life of every individual. They were selected by God from the rest of the human race, and were endowed with particular capacity for a great and noble destiny. Through them the nations were to be brought to recognize the one true God. The word translated 'race' is one which signifies a body of people linked together by the possession of a common life. They form a unity based on the principle of affinity of life. It particularly denotes a people descended from a common ancestor, and, therefore, forming one stock. Such was the Hebrew people. So the first choice was founded on the affinities of natural life. There is nothing more certain in the history of the human race, and in Biblical teaching, than that a principle of choice or election works in God's dealings with men. God does not save men in a mass. But He gives an individual, a family, or a nation a particular mission, and bestows capacity accordingly, and the rest of mankind are blessed through them, along that definite line. Thus the Hebrew race was chosen for a great purpose—namely, to give to the Gentiles the knowledge of God. Descended from their father Abraham, they formed a chosen race with a Divine mission. But we know that the nation failed. Individuals within the nation rose to the ideal, but the nation as a nation failed. The principle of affinity of natural life proved too weak a bond to unite a people to realize the Divine purpose of redeeming the world.

Under the gospel the principle of community of life is again the basis of the Divine choice, but it is the affinity of spiritual life. Thus the conception of 'an elect race' is deepened as far as possible under the new dispensation. The people of faith are now the race chosen of God to fulfil His holy and sublime purpose. This election is one not of exclusion, but of inclusion. God has not arbitrarily excluded any from the sphere of His mercy and love. But He has chosen some in order to reach others. The first idea with regard to the Divine choice is, God 'willeth that all men

[1] J. D. Jones.
[2] *The Life and Friendships of Catherine Marsh*, 254.

should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.' That is the decision or choice of the Divine will. So the Divine election in the first place includes all men to be saved. But this choice becomes a redemptive reality in the individual's life when he yields himself to the will of God. Divine election is based on spiritual life, and spiritual life is realized in and through the Divine choice. These are the two sides of the shield of spiritual reality. In human experience the two form a living unity, not to be separated. The Church of Christ, therefore, is a body of people united together by the possession of a common spiritual life, and endowed with capacities and powers to realize the purpose of the Divine election.

¶ Bishop Bompas visited La Pierre House, west of the Rocky Mountains, and the reception he met with from the Loucheux Indians there filled him with thankfulness, and encouraged him much in his work. Writing of these Indians, he says:

'I have been much cheered in my work among them by finding them all eager for instruction and warm-hearted in their reception of the missionary. Each day I spent in the Loucheux camps was like a Sunday, as the Indians were clustered around me from early morning till late at night, learning prayers, hymns, and Scripture lessons as I was able to teach them. I never met with so earnest desires after God's word, nor have I passed so happy a time since I left England; indeed, I think I may say that, had I ever found at home such a warm attachment of the people to their minister, and so zealous a desire for instruction, I should not have been a missionary. These mountain Loucheux seem the fewest of all people, but I cannot help hoping they are *a chosen race*.[1]

2. *A royal priesthood.*—The second characteristic is a royal priesthood. Here again we are in closest touch with Hebrew thought. The descendants of Jacob were intended by God to be a nation of priests, according to the promise we read of in the Book of Exodus. But here also we find that the nation proved a failure. It could not rise to the glorious altitude of being a nation of priests. But in the dispensation of the gospel we have a people who can be, and are, that. A priesthood is fundamental in the conception of a Christian Church. It is the function not of a section of the community, but of the whole body of believers. It is the universal priesthood of the redeemed.

(1) It may be asked, On what is our priesthood founded? The only possible answer is, The universal priesthood of believers is founded on the eternal priesthood of Christ. In so far as He lives in us, governs our lives, and fashions our characters, we can become the priests of God in the midst of a sinful and needy humanity. We share His absolute priesthood through His ineffable indwelling in us. Christ in us imparts capacities, energies, spiritual fitness and visions of God, in order to make us the efficient instruments of His power unto men's salvation.

(2) But not only is the Church a priesthood; it is also a royal priesthood. Jesus Christ is the eternal Priest; He is also the Eternal King. His Kingship and His Priesthood are absolutely inseparable. They are co-ordinate in the eternal unity of His person and life. The King must be Priest; the Priest must be King. We are made kings and priests unto God in and through Him. Our priesthood is royal because we share His kingship as well as His priesthood. True, ours is derived, narrower, on a lower plane, and its glories are not so transcendant. Yet it is real. It has something in it of the eternal reality of the Royal Priesthood of the Kingly Christ.

¶ 'I am an apostle,' said Paul, 'I magnify mine office.' And we also have an office. Our office is not the apostolic office, but Paul would be the first to say to us that our office is quite as magnificent as ever his office was. Let us, then, magnify our office. Let us magnify its magnificent opportunities; its momentous duties; and its incalculable and everlasting rewards. For our office is the 'royal priesthood.' And we do not nearly enough magnify and exalt our royal priesthood. To be 'kings and priests unto God'—what a magnificent office is that! But then, we who hold that office are men of such small and such mean

[1] W. C. Bompas, *An Apostle of the North*, 138.

minds, our souls so decline and so cleave to this earth, that we never so much as attempt to rise to the height and the splendour of our magnificent office. If our minds were only enlarged and exalted at all up to our office, we would be found of God far oftener than we are, with our sceptre in our hand, and with our mitre upon our head. If we magnified our office, as Paul magnified his office, we would achieve as magnificent results in our office as ever he achieved in his. The truth is—Paul's magnificent results were achieved more in our office than in his own. It was because Paul added on the royal priesthood to the Gentile apostleship that he achieved such magnificent results in that apostleship. And, if we would but magnify our royal priesthood as Paul did—it hath not entered into our hearts so much as to conceive what God hath prepared for those who properly perform their office, as Kings and Priests unto God.[1]

3. *A holy nation.*—This is the widest and most comprehensive of the three names. The word used here for nation means a great body of people bound together into a vast community by all the manifold ties and vital connections by which a great society can be welded together. Many races, descended from different ancestors, may form one nation. The term was used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which became the Bible of the Jews of the Dispersion, and was also the Bible of the early Church, to denote the heathen world, with its countless numbers, over against the people of Israel. They formed the nations—the Gentile world—one vast whole encircling with its multitudinous lives and multiform powers the small society of Israel. Now, this very comprehensive term is applied to the Christian Church. It is a nation. This implies that the Church of Christ possesses such a comprehensiveness of life and character as to be able to form a society great and expansive enough to contain and unite all the nations of the world. Within the Church, families, tribes, nations, and empires are to find their true life and true destiny. Consequently the Christian Church is to solve all the problems of man—individual, social, national, international, world-wide.

The ideal of the modern world is brotherhood—the federation of the world into the unity of righteousness, love, and peace. But the unifying of the human race is to be realized in and through the growth and expansion of this spiritual community. Here is the nucleus of a federated humanity. The key to the solution of the problem is found in the unique character of this nation. It is holy. Holiness denotes that ethical perfection or moral sublimity in God in the presence of which the human spirit prostrates itself in awe, reverence, and worship. Then we come to know that God can communicate a measure of His holiness to man. This holiness is shown and embodied in the moral splendour of the God-inspired soul. As this holiness enters into and permeates the life of society and nations, there will be created out of the chaos of human selfishness, discord, and struggles a world of order, beauty, and harmony. The kingdoms of the world are to become the Kingdom of God and His Christ. The goal of the world's progress is a theocratic commonwealth on whose manifold life, interests, and ideals will be written, 'Holiness unto the Lord.' The Church of Christ is to grow and expand into the world-unifying, world-comprehending and world-glorifying society in which humanity will realize its true ideals and know the plenitude of life.

¶ There have been many confessions recently from quite unexpected quarters, confessions wrung from thinking men who know this country and its problems in the world, that the body of the nation needs not only a brain, but a conscience and a soul, that for the upbuilding of the new generation we need creative faith, that for guidance over new ground and among infinite perplexities we need a moral guide, that to establish anything approaching a brotherhood among men we need the sense, the inspiring sense and the commanding authority of a Fatherhood; that for bridging the chasms that separate the nations with their differences in *morale* and culture and stages of civilization, to say nothing of their national ambitions, we need an institution

[1] A. Whyte, *Lord Teach us to Pray*, 3.

that is spiritual, catholic and super-national, disinterested as to material things and devoted to the wide ideals of humanity. L. T. Hobhouse says that our great national need is the need of moral wisdom. What is all this really but the cry for a Church, not a mere collection of scattered groups, but an organized community, a body, a new race, a holy nation, as Peter says, a phalanx knit together by the Spirit of God and moving out with mind and heart in active service for the things of God?[1]

4. *A peculiar people.*—This is by no means a good translation. The Revised Version reads, 'a people for God's own possession.' That is much better. Yet it can be more exact. Dr. Weymouth, in his *New Testament in Modern Speech,* translates, 'a people belonging especially to God.' This has more grip.

¶ The English word 'peculiar' comes from the Latin *peculium,* which had a special significance in Roman society, being a person's private purse, and especially the private property possessed by a son or daughter independently of their father, or by a slave independently of his master. 'Peculiar' in early English meant 'one's own,' and it is much to be regretted that it can no longer be used in that sense.

The earlier use of the word may be illustrated from Udall's *Erasmus' Paraphrase,* i. fol. 32, 'Every tree hath his peculyer and proper fruyte, which by the taste doeth declare the stocke;' *Synode at Dort,* p. 6, The true cause of the free Election is the good pleasure of God . . . consisting herein, that out of the common multitude of sinners he culled out to himselfe, for his owne peculiar, some certaine persons, or men; and Knox, *Works,* iii. 13, 'Seeke God, who is a peculiar Father to the faithfull, delivering them from all tribulations, not for their worthynesse, but for his own mercie.' So also Herbert in the familiar lines from *The Temple* (§158, 'Judgment')—

Almightie Judge, how shall poor wretches brook
Thy dreadful look,
Able a heart of iron to appall,
When Thou shalt call
For every man's peculiar book?[1]

However, the phrase used here has the idea of being treasured up as well as being a possession. So that we can render the words in this way: 'a people treasured up for God's own possession.' Such were to be the descendants of the Patriarchs. But they went astray and forfeited their privilege. And now the people that were no people are the people of God. The true Israel is found in the community made up of believers in Christ. The elect people are the people of faith and spiritual kinship. These are they whom God preserves, treasures up, pouring into their lives the riches of His grace and glory. This is His all-precious possession—His favourite domain. They are guarded by Him in the midst of the dread struggle between light and darkness, sin and holiness.

[1] G. Darlaston, in *CWP,* cii. 270.

The Laity.

1 Pet. ii. 9.—'A royal priesthood.'

1. WHAT do we mean by a layman? We mean a churchman who is not in Holy Orders. What do we mean by a cleric, the *Clerus?* We mean a churchman who is not a layman. How strangely words degenerate, and in their changing change and weaken the ideas which they at first represented! For in the New Testament *laos* means the whole people of God, the elect race, and royal priesthood, the holy nation; it includes the apostle, the prophet, pastor and teacher, evangelist and helper, while *klēros* means not the body of officers, but the special charge allotted to any worker within the holy nation. This may seem but a small fact of language, but it stands for a great primitive idea. It means that in the eyes of the early Church it was so splendid and sacred a distinction to be within the people of God that no distinctions within the body were anything like as important. To be a layman—whether you were an apostle or only a hearer—was to be a man called, chosen,

[1] *HDB.,* iii. 734.

marked, consecrated, responsible; to be a layman was to have a vocation and a value.

Here lay one of the chief outward differences between the religion of the Temple and the religion of the Upper Room. The old Jewish Church was split into sharply divided castes; the priest, charged with the authoritative dogmatic exposition of the law, stood on a higher plane, clean apart from the common and despised people that knew not the law. The new Church, on the other hand, was one; manifold in tasks but one in spirit, feeling, life; one in the supreme fact that its ascended Lord gave, inspired, sustained the energies of every member. If one man was commissioned to teach, yet all were bearers of the spirit; if one stood to offer the Eucharist, yet all were in the sacerdotal body, fellow-offerers and sharers in the one sacrifice. There was no room for modern clericalism then, because there was no room for the modern layman or for what common opinion means by a layman to-day.

Many of the causes which led to the gradual separation of the clergy and people were natural, and, in their working, justifiable. While in the earliest age a presbyter or deacon would have his trade to follow if he were free, or his master to serve if he were a slave, as the Church grew towards maturity the increase of clerical responsibilities made it necessary to provide a special maintenance for the clergy; the clergy took a stated share of the monthly offerings of the faithful. The effect of this arrangement was that in turn all Church officers came to stand on the footing claimed by St. Paul as permissible to an apostle; preaching the gospel they lived by the gospel. Yet even when this step was taken, and the line of division between cleric and layman became visible as a professional distinction, there was much in early Church life which tended to preserve the conception of Christian unity. Within the Church walls the differences of function brought the distinction between the orders into prominence; but in daily life it was less obvious. Moreover, the lines of hierarchical division were crossed by other distinctions. The possession of a spiritual gift, such as prophecy, might lend one layman more weight than he would have had as presbyter or deacon; another as a confessor or martyr might wield an authority almost as great as that of a bishop; another as a scholar might be found preaching and teaching even where the higher clergy were present to sit under him. Further, for several centuries the laity retained their place in corporate functions of vital importance, such as the election of clergy and bishops, or conciliar deliberation.

But little by little, causes that were rational combining with many that were perverse, the laity lost their ground. The clergy became more and more official and professional, and with the specialization of clerical work came the lowering of the ideals of the laity. As bishops, priests, deacons, and the rest passed clean away from secular life into a sphere of their own, and the clerical profession, the clerical world, came into being, so little by little it began to be felt that the layman's was a lower vocation and a lower responsibility; that he might wear a lighter cross and tread an easier path; and from this root sprang all that lamentable classification of Christian callings—more deadly, perhaps, than any schism—which put the monastic life highest of all, the clerical vocation next, and lowest that of the mere Christian, the mere layman.

2. But the royal priesthood of the faithful was acknowledged by the witness and testimony of the great leaders and teachers of every period of Christian history. The witness of apostles finds its echo in the words of Justin Martyr, who lived on the confines of the sub-Apostolic age. He calls the members of the body of Christ 'the high priestly race of God' (*Dial. contra Tryph.* 117). Later on, in the ante-Nicene period, we find St. Irenæus using similar language when he says that 'Every just man is of the priestly order' (Bk. iv. 8), and Tertullian saying, 'Are not we laymen also priests?' (*De Exhort. Cast.* vii. p. 522). When we turn to the period of the great Councils of the Church, we find St. Augustine saying that the national priesthood of the Jewish nation was a figure 'of that future royal priesthood which is in the Church'

(*Quaest. Evan.*, ii. 40-3); and S. Leo the Great speaks of the 'people of the adoption of God, Whose universal society is priestly and royal' (*Serm.* iii. 2).

To carry the chain of testimony further, we find Isidore of Seville alluding to Baptism and Confirmation in the words: 'There because we are a royal and priestly race, we are on that account anointed after our baptismal washing in order that we may be reckoned amongst those who are of the Name of Christ' (*De. Eccl. Off.* ii. 25). We will cite one testimony more from that mediaeval period in which the due position of the laity had become greatly obscured. The greatest of the Schoolmen, S. Thomas Aquinas, says that 'the righteous layman is united to Christ in a spiritual union by faith and love, and therefore hath a spiritual priesthood for the offering of spiritual sacrifices' (*Summa*, iii. 82, 1). We may, therefore, safely conclude that the common witness of the Church clearly defines the fact that the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers is part and parcel of the faith once delivered to the saints.

¶ Bishop Lightfoot has a classical essay, in which these sentences occur: 'The Kingdom of Christ is not limited by the restrictions which fetter other societies, political or religious. It is free, comprehensive, universal. It accepts all comers who seek admission, irrespective of race or caste or sex. It has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe between God and man, by whose intervention God is reconciled and man is forgiven. Each individual member holds personal communion with the Divine Head. From his Lord directly each obtains pardon, draws strength, and receives grace.' What a charter of enfranchisement is here! What a large room and spacious air! How unconstrained the invitation, and how fructifying the intercourse! The door could not be opened more widely. The boon is unobstructed by provisos or enactments, taxes or dues. The Lord stands, with both of His arms extended, to greet and welcome every one who seeks His face. . . . It has been said that Christianity, in the idea of its Founder, is 'a priestless religion.' But, in another sense, Christianity is a priest-haunted and priest-crowded religion. For all of us, young and old, rich and poor, white and black, the happy-circumstanced and the sorrow-laden, may practise the continual priesthood. Whenever we choose, we can enter the Very Presence of Christ's Father and our Father.

The Life of Holiness.

1 Pet. ii. 9.—'A holy nation.'

The life of holiness is both an essentially separate and an essentially social life. Inwardly it is a life of separateness; outwardly, a life of fellowship. Contradictory as these two qualities, separateness and fellowship, may seem, both are indispensable to holiness. If either be lacking to our holiness, its nature is not complete and full.

1. The Bible is the greatest of all authorities upon holiness. And when we enquire of the Bible concerning the nature of the holiness, whether of persons or of things, we find that one of its chief characteristics is separateness. To sanctify means to separate. The sanctification of the Tabernacle, of the firstborn, of the Sabbath Day, of the priestly garments, signified their separation from common and profane uses, and their dedication to the service of God. Similarly with holy persons. The Bible expects them to be distinct. It describes the children of the Lord as an elect race, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a people marked out for God's own possession. The people for whom our Saviour Christ gave Himself are said to be a peculiar people. Sanctified things and sanctified persons are, therefore, in the Scriptural sense of the terms, persons and things set apart. No person and no thing is regarded in the Bible as holy unless fenced off from ordinary persons and ordinary things. Distinctiveness is an indispensable quality of holiness.

But this necessary distinctiveness is of a quite remarkable character. It is a distinctiveness not of form and appearance so much as of purpose and object. The ground about the burning bush, for example, was not externally different from that of the neighbour-

ing wilderness. The incense of Moses and Aaron was chemically similar to that of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. The ark of God was made of ordinary shittim wood, and overlaid with ordinary gold. The Sabbath, regarded astronomically, was not unlike any other day of the week. The stones of the temple were cut from the common quarries, and set like the stones of other buildings. In outward appearance hardly any of these things were distinct or peculiar. Yet they were separate, sanctified, holy. God told Moses that the ground about the burning bush was holy ground. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were consumed for burning their incense before the Lord. Uzzah was smitten to death for putting out his hand to steady the Ark. The Sabbath was a kind of sacramental sign between Jehovah and Israel. And our Lord's anger was specially kindled against those who treated the Temple courts as a market place, or, in their irreverence, were forgetful that the Temple was the heavenly Father's house, the house of prayer.

And what is true of holy institutions, and holy places, and holy things, is true also of holy persons. In one signal property, indeed, the holiness of persons is fundamentally different from the holiness of things. Holy things are not conscious of their separation unto holiness. Holy persons, on the contrary, are deeply conscious of it; conscious of it in themselves, conscious of it before God. But their consciousness of it is not, of necessity, displayed by any seclusive sign or any professional mark conspicuous to others. Their hallowing is essentially an inward hallowing. It is not a separation of dress, or vocation, or traditional rule, but of aim, and character, and life. The inward spirit, and not the outward profession, is one chief test of true holiness.

2. And if inward separation, inward hallowing, be one test of genuine holiness, another test, equally important, is fellowship. Social commingling is as necessary a part of the nature of true holiness as spiritual separation. This is one of the keynotes of our Lord's great valedictory prayer for His disciples. 'Father, I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.' The social character of our Lord's life is one of its most remarkable features. He came 'eating and drinking.' By far the larger part of His life was spent in His village home, not improbably at work at His foster-father's trade. The common taunt levelled against Him was that He 'was a carpenter.' His first great manifestation of His Divinity was at a marriage feast. His first miracle was a social miracle. His periods of seclusion were rare and brief. At times, indeed, He went to a desert place to rest a while, or withdrew to a mountain to pray, or was taken by the Spirit into the wilderness for some great wrestling with the Evil One; but He was soon back again healing the sick, casting out devils, preaching to the poor. He wore no phylacteries or conspicuous clothing. He did not stand apart at the corners of the streets to pray. He kept His fastings secretly. When He did some kindly act, He 'would have no man know it.' It is true that He 'could not be hid.' But whatever notice He attracted was involuntary. He never wrought a single sign to draw attention to Himself. His light shone to His Father's glory. His works testified of Him. The great witness of His holiness was His work for men, and among men. He does not seem to have been distinguished by any mark of outward custom or appearance. He was altogether separate from the world inwardly. But his inward separation was testified principally by the tremendous energy of His social life; His mingling with the people for the people's good.

The Bible nowhere recognizes in asceticism the highest type of holiness. Our Lord Himself was no ascetic; nor were any of His Apostles. St. Peter was a married man; so probably was St. John. The great majority of the Apostles were men of a social and domestic type. Even St. Paul's preference for the celibate life was not grounded on any assumption of its spiritual superiority above the married life, but solely upon consideration of utility. He preferred to be free from all household cares that he might devote himself the more fully to the social service of Christianity.

Similarly he praised the self-sacrifice of women who abstained from marriage in order that they might give themselves up wholly to work for the Lord. It is in this sense only, the greater freedom for work, that St. Paul affirms the unmarried life, whether of women or of men, to be preferable to the married life. And even to this restricted sense he is most careful to add, evidently feeling that the matter was non-essential, 'I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.'

¶ How utterly opposed to the thought of Jesus Christ is all asceticism, all religious isolation and retreat from the world. His aim was not to get His followers out of the world, but to get them into the world. Society, not solitude, is the natural home of Christianity. The Christian is not to flee from the contagion of evil, but to meet it with the contact of health and holiness. The church is not to be built on glass posts for moral insulation, but among the homes of common men for moral transformation. What use is a light under a bushel? It must shine where there is darkness. The place of need is the field of duty, and though we are not to be of the world, we are to be first and last in the world for the world.[1]

Lord, I have fasted, I have prayed,
  And sackcloth has my girdle been,
To purge my soul I have essayed
  With hunger blank and vigil keen;
O God of mercy! Why am I
Still haunted by the self I fly?

. . . . . .

Sackcloth is a girdle good,
  O bind it round thee still:
Fasting, it is Angels' food,
  And Jesus loved the night air chill;
Yet think not prayer and fast were given
To make one step 'twixt earth and Heaven.

3. Still, while we are bound to remember the social character of true holiness as unfolded throughout the Bible and made especially manifest by the Incarnation, we are bound to remember also the equally important fact that holiness is essentially separate. We cannot be truly holy unless we are separate, any more than we can be completely holy without being social. In the Scriptures oil is a common figure of holiness. But oil will not mix with any matter not akin to itself. Oil poured upon troubled waters will calm but will not mix with them. So with the oil of holiness in the world. Its presence calms, and heals, and beautifies worldly things; but it does not mix with them; it cannot mix with them. The spirit of holiness is contrary to the world-spirit. The world-spirit is a time-spirit. It walks by sight, and lives by sense. It dwells among things seen. It seeks material rewards. But the spirit of holiness is an altogether different spirit. Its vision pierces the walls of sense, and overleaps the limits of time. It is an eternal spirit. It sees Him who is invisible. Its hopes are anchored within the veil. Purity is its great passion. It dwells among things unseen. Its crown is incorruptible and fadeth not away. Between the world-spirit and the spirit of holiness, therefore, there can be no fellowship, no communion, no concord, no agreement. They are antipathetic, antagonistic spirits—spirits in truceless enmity with each other. Peace between them is impossible. All true disciples of the holy Saviour are not only separate from sin; they are separate also from worldliness. Inward and absolute separateness from the world is as integral to the nature of holiness as outward social work in the world.

Outwardly the surface of holy and worldly lives may appear, in many respects, similar to each other. Holy persons move, and speak, and act in the world much as do other persons in all innocent pleasures, and honest employments, and pure pursuits, and guileless mirth; but inwardly their lives are entirely different—different in character, and motive, and aim, and result. The holy life is a life hid with Christ in God. It is a life gradually detaching itself more and more from things seen and temporal, and finding its fullness more and more abundantly in things unseen and eternal.

¶ If the Divine to perfect itself must keep in touch with earth, the human to perfect itself must keep in touch with Heaven.[1]

[1] M. D. Babcock, *Thoughts for Every-Day Living*, 42.

[1] E. G. Miles, *The Shining Highway*, 96.

What do you seek within, O Soul, my Brother?
What do you seek within?
I seek a Life that shall never die,
Some haven to win
From mortality.

What do you find within, O Soul, my Brother?
What do you find within?
I find great quiet where no noises come.
Without, the world's din:
Silence in my home.

Whom do you find within, O Soul, my Brother?
Whom do you find within?
I find a friend that in secret came:
His scarred hands within
He shields a faint flame.

What would you do within, O soul, my Brother?
What would you do within?
Bar door and window that none may see:
That alone we may be
(Alone! face to face,
In that flame-lit place!)
When first we begin
To speak one with another.[1]

Darkness and Light.

1 Pet. ii. 9.—'Who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.'

In the passage immediately preceding these words the Apostle speaks of Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone, and refers to the case of those to whom that stone was a stone of stumbling and rock of offence. There were multitudes who stumbled at the Word,—the message of deliverance and salvation through the crucified and risen Saviour—being disobedient and hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. But there were many also—and the Apostle addresses such—who in the Lord's saving mercy had been led forth out of the darkness wherein they had wandered and stumbled, had been brought into the Lord's glorious marvellous light, and walking in it were now called to show forth the Lord's praise.

[1] Evelyn Underhill.

1. *Darkness.*—God is light; He alone is light, and there is no light for those who are not in His presence. Until the great change comes we are out of God's presence and dwell in darkness as those whose deeds are naturally deeds of evil. The darkness of our state is that of sin. 'We walk in darkness, and know not whither we go, because that darkness hath blinded our eyes.' 'We have the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us, because of the blindness of our hearts.' 'We have become vain in our imaginations, and our foolish hearts are darkened.'

Physical blindness excludes us only from the perception of some of the works of God, and from enjoyment of some of His gifts; spiritual blindness deprives us of the perception and enjoyment of God Himself, and of all living insight into His ways and dispensations. Morn and eve, land and sea and sky show us nothing to compare with the excellency of God Himself and the glory of Jesus Christ. God can easily and richly compensate a man for the want of knowledge of anything finite; but what compensation can there be for the want of knowledge of His own perfections, and especially of His love and mercy in Jesus Christ? That knowledge is the highest good; it is true and eternal life.

Because I seek Thee not, oh seek Thou me!
Because my lips are dumb, oh hear the cry
I do not utter as Thou passest by,
And from my life-long bondage set me free!
Because content I perish, far from Thee,
O seize me, snatch me from my fate, and try
My soul in Thy consuming fire! Draw nigh
And let me, blinded, Thy salvation see.

If I were pouring at Thy feet my tears,
If I were clamoring to see Thy face,
I should not need Thee, Lord, as now I need,
Whose dumb, dead soul knows neither hopes nor fears,
Nor dreads the outer darkness of this place—
Because I seek not, pray not, give Thou heed![1]

[1] Louise Chandler Moulton.

2. *Deepening Darkness.*—The deeper darkness is due to the approach of light. Our dreams, with all their incident and adventure, belong to the borderland where sleep is loosening its chains from off us and our spirits are awaking from their lethargy. We struggle against mountainous oppressions, we swim for life in tossing seas, we grope despairingly along unending caverns, and the explanation is that a new day is calling us, and our senses are struggling to awake. It is not otherwise with the despairing darkness of the soul, which, hard as it is to bear, is felt at all because the light is breaking in and the soul is already half awake. A man has been lying stupid and supine, without a qualm or struggle, but now in his dull sense the voice of God is sounding, and terrors and shame take hold of him. When he hears better he will change his mood, but now he is only on the way.

It is the awakening sense of God that makes a man aware of his fault; he is bitterly and despairingly conscious that he is not good because he is on his way to be better. If any one upon some other day had questioned Bartimæus as to what he desired, the answer would have been trivial and free from all emotion, for he needed bread and money and a hand to guide him across the street—things which had no touch of miracle upon them. But when, with the rumour of Christ's passing, the chance of healing came close, these common needs were pushed aside by a sudden torturing sense of deprivation; the one matter which engaged him now was this, 'Lord, that I may receive my sight.' In that moment he felt more of the bitterness of being blind than in all the years before. With the energy of his nature he protested against it, and the reason was that Jesus of Nazareth, carrying with Him some possibility of eyesight, was actually there. The sullen acquiescence in what had become familiar and a means of livelihood vanished, and instead there appeared this imperious demand, for the nearness of light made the persistent darkness seem an outrage.

Isaiah tells how one day when he was a youth, blinded by the tidings of the death of Uzziah, the magnificent, he had strayed into the Temple, and there, in a vision, found himself in the presence of a mightier King. 'I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and I heard the seraphim crying Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts; the fullness of all the earth is his glory. And the foundations of the house were moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.' He enjoyed, that is, one moment of clear vision, but then the darkness came rushing in. 'Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; for I, a man of unclean lips, have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.' That is, in another age, Peter's cry of, 'Depart from me'; and, in another faith, it is Plutarch's 'terrors manifold, and shudderings and amazement.' It is the confession of human weakness and fault when confronted with the Divine magnificence; for the first effect of that is not light but gloom. A man feels that he cannot look at what thus passes knowledge, that he cannot worship where his ignoble ways are thus discovered. He is afraid, and would fain stand afar off.

3. *Light.*—Christ, appearing as the Light of the world for our salvation, triumphed over all the powers of darkness and of death, and as He rose from the dead the Sun rose for those who were sitting in darkness and in death's shadow. The gospel message is the proclamation that the True Light now shineth, and it is the call out of the darkness into the light. 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' Christ's word moving the heart by the power of His Spirit is an effectual call. The desire is awakened within us to be set free from everything that hinders us, and the call comes with the power of Him who is the Almighty; and thus the power of darkness is broken by it, and the power of the rulers of the darkness overthrown. The call and the translation is into the Lord's marvellous light. It is the light of the Lord's glorious and gracious presence, the light of His countenance.

(1) The light comes first from the experience of pardon. Those who speak of the excellences of God have much to say of how,

when their hearts were bitter because of their ill-doing, they were met with a loving sentence of pardon: 'Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity,' who 'retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy?' In heaven they ever sing praise to 'him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins.'

This is a matter on which we must deal plainly with ourselves. In our world there is much that makes for gloom—sickness and care and sin; and we need to remind ourselves that God has called us out of the darkness, and that we have no right to continue accusing and bemoaning ourselves. 'Who shall lay any thing,' says Paul, 'to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ that died,'—a great death, in which there is provision for you and me and all the world of men. And thus our duty is to set our faces towards the light, and to treat our oppressions as belonging to the evil past. 'The darkness is passing away,' says John, 'and the true light, which means confidence and joy and rest, is already shining.'

The bonds that press and fetter,
  That chafe the soul and fret her,
What man can know them better,
  O brother men, than I?

And yet, my burden bearing,
The five wounds ever wearing,—
I too in my despairing
  Have seen Him as I say;—
Gross darkness all around Him
Enwrapt Him and enwound Him,—
O late at night I found Him
  And lost Him in the day.

Yet bolder grown and braver
At sight of one to save her
My soul no more shall waver,
  With wings no longer furled,—
But cut with one decision
From doubt and men's derision
That sweet and vanished vision
  Shall follow through the world.[1]

(2) But forgiveness, great as it is, is not the last word of God, 'who,' as Coleridge puts it, 'by His only-begotten Son (all mercies in one sovereign mercy!) has reedemed you from the evil ground, and has willed you to be born out of darkness but into light, out of death but into life, out of sin but into righteousness.' There is a Christian experience which stops at the mere article of escape, an experience which is altogether negative, an experience which, strictly, does not deserve the name of Christian. For in Christian faith and Christian experience and Christian morals the negative has always the positive in view. A right disciple is not so much one who has no faults as one who possesses some quality; he is not content to be good, but seeks to be good for something. To converted thieves St. Paul said, It is not enough that you should no longer live at the expense of your neighbours, you must go to work, that so you may have to give to him who needs. It is not enough, he says to others, that you have cleansed your tongues, so that you now can talk without offence, you have still to learn to speak in such a way as to minister a grace to those who hear, making them gladder and wiser and stronger men. Christian character is all made up of positives, and Christian experience, matching that, is not toneless and colourless. It comes adding sunshine to the daylight; for friendship, and duty, and success, and the earth's beauty are all irradiated for a believing man. God's purpose for us is that we should walk in a light that is marvellous, a light that has pleasure in it. It is not always high water with any man, for all have their seasons of ebb tide, when feeling flags; and yet, if we know nothing of this marvellous light our religion is shallow indeed.

¶ 'To know Christ,' says Melanchthon, 'is to know the benefits which He brings with Him'; and so this knowledge can come to us only by experience. St. Paul, in the end, was able to say, 'To me to live is Christ,' for He seemed to enter into everything, giving it savour and intensity, and nothing could be profitless since He was in it.[1]

[1] F. W. H. Myers, *A Vision.*

[1] W. M. Macgregor

The Enemies of the Soul.

1 Pet. ii. 11.—'Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.'

If we examine our unwritten codes of moral law, we shall find that in each and all of them whatever is accounted evil—be it a desire, an act, a quality, or a habit—tends either to contract the soul or (at best) to arrest its growth.

1. Let us start with the ordinary self and ask ourselves how its various vices and moral weaknesses react upon it. Let us first consider those which are commonly regarded as the lowest and grossest—incontinence, intemperance (in food and drink), indulgence in drugs, uncontrollable anger, the lust of cruelty, and the like. All these 'war against the soul.' In other words, they tend to degrade it to the level of its own animal plane of existence. This they do in two ways. They set up in the soul affinities for material ends and objects, and so drag it back into the mire (for mire it is until it has been transfigured and spiritualized), out of which it is ever struggling to emerge. And they bind the soul in the iron chains of immutable habit, thereby depriving it of freedom, which is the very counterpart of spirituality and therefore one of the vital conditions of spiritual development. Thus not merely do they hinder the soul from growing, but they actually reverse the process of its growth—contract it, degrade it, unweave the fabric of its higher self.

¶ Know that your greatest enemy is the animal nature within yourself; for it is this, if you will allow it, that will prevent your attainment of what is most precious to you. A regard for physical health alone shows the necessity for pure living; but regard for the soul's well-being shows it much more. Strive to realise in the clearest manner the distinction between your true self and your animal nature. Though this nature has a necessary part in your existence in this world, it is not you—you who think, you who know right and wrong, you who experience joy and sorrow. The animal knows nothing of right and wrong, nothing of reason, nothing of any real good; it merely craves for indulgence. If you yield to this craving you make yourself the slave of your lower nature and shame out of yourself the dignity of true manhood. Remember that you are a developing soul, that there are higher states of consciousness—sunny, harmonious heights—open to you, and that you can get up there only after you have overcome and uprooted the carnal desires. It is for you, a spiritual being, to assert full mastery over the body and every part of it. Perhaps the carnal man has worked himself into your heart, and you have come to be fond of him. He will cling the closer when there is thought of his expulsion. He will suggest that the idea is most absurd, and ask what pleasure you would have in life if that were done. Pleasure! That is all he can claim for himself. And what kind of pleasure is it that comes from sensual indulgence? Brief and hollow at the best; and when it is over there is humiliation and degradation of the rational nature. The only permanent pleasure the human soul can experience is that which comes from right-doing and right-living; and every gratification of the animal only puts this permanent happiness farther away.[1]

2. Next to these carnal vices come the moral failings that are generated by petty egoism—vanity, self-conceit, self-importance, self-will, envy, jealousy, malice, slander and other forms of uncharitableness. Petty egoism is that attitude towards life which reflects the reluctance of a man's soul to meet the demands that self-development makes on its energy and devotion, and its consequent attempt to find a substitute for self-development in self-assertion. The sphere of his influence may be a very narrow one, but it will probably be large enough for his purpose. If he can but be the centre of a circle, it matters little how small that circle is. In his desire to push himself to the centre, or to what he conceives to be the centre, he necessarily disregards the rights and interests, the feelings and susceptibilities of others, and so sets up a habit of selfishness which at last becomes his second nature. But the real

[1] R. H. Hodgson, *Glad Tidings*, 18.

source of his moral failings lies deeper than men suspect. From first to last his life is based on self-deception. When his secret doubts have at last been silenced, when his secret self-distrust has been removed, when he has convinced himself that his ordinary self is worthy of the high esteem in which he desires to hold it, worthy of the love which really belongs to his ideal self—then the process of soul-growth has been arrested, and degeneration of his moral tissue has set in.

¶ The difference between a selfish man and an unselfish man is not one of essential nature, as many people imagine, but one of development or attainment. Selfishness and unselfishness are soul-states, the former being the low state of development and the latter the higher state. The way that leads from the lower state to the higher is open to every soul; and the progress that each makes along this way depends almost entirely on one's own conscious effort. Some attain to the higher state quickly; others go through life making little or no progress. It is of the highest importance, therefore, that every individual who would make the most of life and realise the highest of which he is capable should know precisely what this development is and how it may be accomplished.

The abandonment of the state of consciousness which is concerned only with personal desires and pleasures is usually regarded with dread, as the suffering of a great loss. The soul clings to the pleasure-seeking state as to dear life, and to renounce it seems almost like death. The renunciation verily is a sacrifice not to be easily accomplished. Yet this sacrifice is the way into life. It is the sacrifice of the lower for the higher. When the soul renounces the lower state of consciousness, forthwith a higher state is realised. Goodwill to all takes the place of self-love; and the life is found 'wherein all contradiction is solved; wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him.' [1]

3. There is a third group of vices, which is the outcome of egoism working more boldly, more aggressively, and on a larger scale. The desires for wealth, for power, for position, for fame, lead men to practise every kind of injustice and unkindness towards their fellowmen—to oppress them, cheat them, rob them, ruin them. And these desires are all generated by the effort to aggrandize the ordinary self instead of expanding it, to enrich it with the accessories of life instead of with life itself. The soul in which covetousness and ambition—vices which have ever deluged the world with blood and darkened it with misery—flourish most vigorously is one in which self-love, though strong and insatiable, has been entirely divorced from spiritual aspiration. The effect of these vices on the soul that harbours them is, on the one hand, to destroy its sense of proportion and its standard of reality, and at last to materialize and externalize its whole outlook on life; and, on the other hand, to make it more and more self-centred, till at last it is drawn by an irresistible current into the bottomless vortex of its own ever-narrowing self. Consciously, we condemn these anti-social vices because of the ruin and woe that they work among men. Unconsciously, we condemn them because they harden, debase, contract, and warp the soul.

¶ Ambition, the desire to overtop our fellows, to have more than other people have, to be more than other people are, has left a blood-stained trail across history. It began back in the jungle where men had to conquer or die. Either this chief would overthrow that chief and seize his wives and his estate, or else that chief would overthrow this chief and seize his. Under such circumstances, when a man was born with a powerful endowment of physical and mental force, there was but one channel in which that overflowing stream of personal energy could flow—ambition to surpass and overcome.

When this primitive instinct, ingrained by immemorial necessity, passed from the jungle into history, the consequences were terrific. Pierre Fritel's picture, 'The Conquerors,' tells the story. Between two rows of the piled dead, men stark and naked, women with cold babies at their breasts, amid the bleak desolation of old battlefields, the conquerors appear, Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon, and their ambi-

[1] R. H. Hodgson, *Glad Tidings*, 22.

tious company, riding on horseback amid bloody scenes to their supremacy.[1]

4. There are other evil tendencies which are compatible with a comparatively high degree of spiritual development. It is possible to be proof against all the solicitations of sensual desire, to rise superior to every form of petty egoism, to despise wealth and power and fame, to have successfully practised self-control and self-culture, and yet to be possessed by demons of pride and hatred. In these vices resistance to the centripetal tendencies of Nature starts from a far higher level than in any other: for that very reason they are stronger, more effective, and more injurious to the soul that praises them. The last, the highest, the most spiritual, the most deadly of all forms of iniquity—pride, and the hatred which pride engenders—is the product of an intense and far-seeing individualism. It is the fruit of a soul in which dread of the infinite has changed into abhorrence of the infinite, and which is therefore ready to spiritualize itself in order that it may meet with their own weapons the spiritual influences which it fears and detests. It is ready to go far along the road of self-expansion in order that it may strengthen itself to resist the higher expansive forces which must sooner or later be brought to bear upon it, in order that by setting these at defiance it may separate itself,—in the madness of its self-exaltation—separate itself fully, finally, and irretrievably, from the soul of the Universe, from the spirit of God. A wise instinct has led men to think of the master spirit of evil, the 'Prince of Darkness,' as possessed by the most egoistic, the most centrifugal of all passions—as the very personification of *pride*.

¶ Tolstoy in 1896 wrote his *Patriotism and Government*, in which he quotes from a speech made by Kaiser Wilhelm in 1891 to German soldiers: 'You have taken the oath of allegiance to *me;* this means, children of my Guards, that you are now *my* soldiers, that you have given yourselves up to me, body and soul. Only one enemy exists for you—*my* enemy. With the present socialistic intrigues it may happen that I shall command you to shoot your own relatives, your brothers, even your parents (from which may God preserve us), and then you are in duty bound to obey my orders unhesitatingly.' Tolstoy calls the Kaiser the *enfant terrible* of State authority, who expresses what other men only venture to think. Tolstoy's comment on him is: 'Poor sick miserable man, intoxicated with power, who by those words insults all that is sacred to men of modern civilization!'[1]

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character*, 146.

Christian Subjection.

1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.—'Submit yourselves (RV 'Be subject') to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.'

The Christian enjoys liberty—the liberty that is in Christ. But He is also in subjection. He has to submit himself to human institutions, such as the Family and the State. In ancient society subjection was taken for granted as a necessary condition for the well-being of the community; but, as a universal principle of personal life, subjection is characteristically Christian. It consists not in the sacrifice of the individual to the community, the weakness of ancient social life, but in the recognition that the individual attains his own true growth and freedom only through devotion to the community, and submission to the various forms of authority by which society is constituted.

Perhaps the best way of rendering St. Peter's counsel into English is this, 'Submit to every fundamental human institution for the Lord's sake.' The word translated in our Authorized Version 'ordinance' is often rendered 'creation': it was also used of the founding of cities, and has usually to do with what is fundamental, basic, lying at the roots of life. And the Apostle's point is this, that, however far human society may have gone astray and strewn its own path with traps and snares, there are certain ingredients in its constitution so fundamental as to involve a Divine

[1] H. Black, *The Cleavage of the World*, 63.

authority and a Divine ideal; and to these things a man's Christianity does not ask him to be disloyal.

St. Peter doubtless had in mind the chief ruler of a country or wider region, whatever the precise nature of his office, but specially the ruler of the Roman Empire. In the Greek East for a long while before the Christian Era the successors of Alexander in their several lines were the typical kings, and from them the title was freely applied to the Roman emperors by Greek lips, notwithstanding the Roman hatred of the title. It is a striking thought that the emperor under whom St. Peter wrote, and who was thus the living representative of kingship at the time when kingship, or the authority of the supreme magistrate, was thus consecrated in an apostolic Epistle, was Nero. If St. Peter's language was to be accepted as true, there could be few rulers indeed whose claims on loyalty would be sustained by less personal merit.

As a man he deserved little or nothing at the hands of his subjects. Yet Emperors and Magistrates were the embodiment of a system, and however imperfect the individual might be, the system on the whole worked out as an ethical force, 'for the punishment of wrong-doers and the encouragement of honest people.' Human nature is such a turbulent thing that it takes manifold restraints to keep it in order. There are natural means whose writ runs a certain distance: after that a Supernatural Grace needs to step in and complete the work. But the Church may be thankful that in her supernatural task she has the natural foundations to build upon. If the Church had to be continually re-laying or repairing the elemental moralities, she would have no time to lead men towards the heights of the Christian aim. On the whole, among civilized peoples, the State may be left to look after the more rough-hewn and obvious elements in the ethical code. Taking a general view of this arrangement we may regard it as so far Divine: 'for so is the will of God.' Reverence this order of things and submit to it. St. Peter and St. Paul were at one about this: their phrases are almost identical. 'So is the will of God,' said the one about Emperors and Governors. 'The powers that be are ordained of God,' said the other with an expansion and emphasis of his own.

1. Why should Christian men so submit? Two points are outstanding in St. Peter's thought.

(1) First, it is 'for the Lord's sake,' because we desire lovingly to imitate the spirit of Him who Himself submitted even unto death. The phrase 'for his sake' or its equivalent is frequent in the New Testament—'We are fools for Christ's sake' (1 Cor. iv. 10); 'Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake' (2 Cor. iv. 5): 'For his name's sake they went forth' (3 Jn. 7). There is usually in the phrase 'a suggestion of voluntary discipline or sacrifice.' 'Submit . . . for the Lord's sake': you are taking the path which once led through Pilate's judgment hall! The other part of the motive is the stopping of needless calumny. Slanders and persecutions will come: yet the burden of them is sore and they make the battle hard: there is no need to provoke them foolishly. 'Submit . . . that with well-doing ye may muzzle'—that is the strong and vivid word which the Apostle uses—'the ignorance of foolish men.' Senseless men will no doubt have their say, but take the wind out of their sails: let their calumnies die upon their lips, when they see what good citizens Christian men can be.

(2) More beautiful still is St. Peter's conception of the 'How,' the spirit and method of a submission prompted by such high motives as those. 'As free'—that is characteristically the Christian note—bringing this submission, like every other gift or service, as a willing offering. 'Not using your liberty as a cloke for maliciousness.' Christianity was not going to provide a cave of Adullam for those who had some grudge against the State and might use their new-found liberty to pay off a personal grudge. This goes with the following counsel, 'Honour all men,' to bring to the surface the consistent under-current of the Apostle's thought—that separateness need not involve scorn and bitterness. 'As the bond-slaves of God'—let the Emperor know it if he will—these men are prepared freely to submit

to him because they have first freely submitted to One infinitely higher than he.

This was to introduce into citizenship a new standpoint and a new spirit. Christianity does not consist in the things we do so much as in the spirit in which we do them. The Christian and the non-Christian side by side in the same State may do nine things out of ten alike, or ninety-nine out of a hundred. They both go about their daily work. They both vote, and pay rates and taxes, and discharge their public and personal obligations. Cæsar may not see a hair's-breadth of difference between them Yet the Christian has a motive and a spirit all his own: he has learned to make his life, even his life as a citizen, an offering; and behind all earthly pomps and powers he sees a Throne, supreme, tremendous, eternal. It is from that Throne that there come to him such plain, wise precepts as these, 'Honour all men: love the brotherhood: fear God: honour the king'—'a constellation of very bright stars near together,' Leighton says. And he who takes his conception of the primal duties from that Throne will be all the better a citizen of this world's kingdom—free, self-dedicated, loving, humble.

2. Yet, whatever an Apostle may say, the modern spirit in us wants to ask whether there are no limitations and qualifications to this doctrine of submission. Indeed our honesty of heart and conscience cries out, and cries in the name of experience, and even in the name of Christ, that there must be such limits to the idea. Monarchies and magistracies cannot always be trusted to punish evil and praise the well-doer: sometimes they have in most unjust and unholy fashion reversed their commission, advanced the evil, repressed the good, tyrannized over conscience. 'There be few crowns in the world,' Leighton quaintly says, 'in which there will not be found some crack or other, more or less.' Give them all a fair chance, no doubt, but some have had a fair chance and have been tried and found wanting. The Christian Church found out very soon how evil and implacable the State could be. It is one of the arguments for the early date of this letter that there is so little trace in it of the agony that shoots through the Book of Revelation—the desperate position of the Christian man when he was compelled to worship Cæsar and so to deny Christ, his patriotism and his Christianity thus being set in radical opposition.

The Church soon learned by bitter experience that there are some things which the State has no right to do, and that therefore the counsel of submission has its limitations. If there are texts, such as these verses, which might easily be twisted into a doctrine of the Divine right of kings, there are many others, from the prophets not least, which may be used to weight a different argument and so hold the balance even. If 'Submit' had been the whole counsel of God, then there would have been no liberty and no progress: it is possible to defy as well as to submit for Christ's sake and for the common good, and our liberties have been purchased for us with the blood of those who have dared to defy. If St. Peter does not say this in so many words, he implies it in two ways at least. He implies it in the phrase 'as free': men are free from the lesser authority only by recognizing the Greater, which has given the lesser not only its place but its bounds. And he implies it in the whole purpose of his letter, which is to strengthen men, amid the storms of persecution, to stand firm for the faith of Christ. There again, by implication, he asserts the supreme allegiance against which all lower authorities dash themselves in pieces: these driven and hunted men may indeed submit their poor bodies to Cæsar and his will—it is the utmost he can exact and the utmost he may receive—but their conscience and their faith they cannot submit. So the doctrine of submission, even as the Apostle presents it, supplies its own qualifications, and Nero's throne looks small and evanescent against the background of the ultimate Right.

Cæsar is no more, and in modern conditions most of his functions have been taken over by the free citizens of lands constitutionally governed. But we need still to keep fresh the vision of the higher Authority lest we substitute for the tyranny of a monarch the

equally cruel and irrational tyranny of a mob. So our duty is not only submission to the powers that be, but education of the powers that be, that many-headed Cæsar may know his duties and his limits, and observe both in the fear of God. He will never learn these lessons unless the Christian citizen sets the example of public spirit and of high principle in the affairs of state. Cæsar of long ago was outside the power of the good men of Pontus or Cappadocia: the State of to-day is shaped by its own citizens, by their service or by their neglect, by their largemindedness or by their narrow outlook, by their desire, or by their lack of desire, to have all things earthly shaped after the pattern shown them in the Mount. The Christian man's constant prayer will be that his own community, state or empire may be worthy of the best hopes of its children. He will support his prayer by his service. For the complete Christian is a good citizen, and even in Babylon he will clear ground for the building of Jerusalem.[1]

Fair is our lot—O goodly is our heritage!
(Humble ye, my people, and be fearful in
your mirth!)
For the Lord our God most High
He hath made the deep as dry,
He hath smote for us a pathway to the ends
of all the Earth!

Yea, though we sinned—and our rulers went
from righteousness—
Deep in all dishonour though we stained our
garments' hem,
Oh, be ye not dismayed,
Though we stumbled and we strayed,
We were led by evil counsellors—the Lord
shall deal with them!

Hold ye the Faith—the Faith our Fathers
sealèd us;
Whoring not with visions—overwise and
overstale.
Except ye pay the Lord
Single heart and single sword,
Of your children in their bondage shall He
ask them treble-tale!

Keep ye the Law—be swift in all obedience—
Clear the land of evil, drive the road and
bridge the ford.
Make ye sure to each his own
That he reap where he hath sown;
By the peace among our peoples let men
know we serve the Lord![1]

[1] J. M. E. Ross.

Public Life.

1 Pet. ii. 15.—'So is the will of God that by well-doing ye should put to shame the ignorance of foolish men' (RV).

As Christians, we are bound to see in all our life, corporate as well as individual, an opportunity of conforming our own souls to the image of Christ, and of stamping the impress of His will and His example on the life of the whole community. What should this Christian faith teach us in regard to political enthusiasm and political action?

1. First of all, it ought to give us a freer and more energetic determination to claim our right share in the social and national life. For to us history is no mere phantasmagoria of change, in which one nation rises and another falls, one class advances and another recedes, the individual struts his brief hour on the stage, and then gives place to another short-lived and impotent actor. Those who hold that wretched idea of life may well despise their freedom, and surrender it contentedly to any authority which will take from them the burden of an aimless and hopeless existence. But no Christian can ever hold this view. To us history is a working out, through human hands, of the great dispensation of God to man, the central fact of which is the manifestation of Jesus Christ. In that working out every truth maintained, every wrong undone, every tear of the oppressed wiped away, every education of an individual soul, every elevation of a class, is a step towards the final consummation of all things in the victory of truth and love. It is a service to God, and a preparation for the sovereignty of Jesus Christ. If we have power to aid in

[1] Rudyard Kipling.

that progress, we have responsibility. By that responsibility we are bound to claim our own freedom, and use its opportunities. By that responsibility we are bound to direct in right channels the great power and influence of our nation. How can anyone who realizes this stand aloof from political life in selfish devotion to his own business, in indolent and cowardly care of his own ease, in philosophic indifference, or in a religious asceticism despairing of the world? No! In any great political crisis, as surely as in the critical times of the spiritual struggle within, or of the battle of the Church without, he will hear the Lord's words, 'He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.' Hearing, he must and he will obey.

¶ It is a fact that many good men take no part in public affairs, save to growl. They do not vote. They say the business is too rotten for them to touch; and why so rotten? Because your ideal citizen is too indifferent to cast a ballot in favour of civic soundness. In the meanwhile the slugger from the slums, who votes early and often, beats in the final count. 'What do you think of the foreign-born Irishman who votes twice in the same day?' was asked of the president of a Northern college.

'I think more of him than of the native-born American who does not vote at all,' was the laconic reply. Not to vote in this land is worse than neglecting a privilege. It is shunning a duty, it is shirking a responsibility, it is little short of a crime against one's country.[1]

¶ I care—that's why I am in politics.[2]

2. But, in the next place, feeling that in all social and political action there is a service of Christ, he will strive, as in his private business, to keep it honest and truthful, unselfish and pure. The words sound almost ironical to those who know what the war of politics too often is. They who look anxiously on the progress of free institutions see with absolute dismay, not merely the occurrence of corruption and bribery, of slander and misrepresentation, of treachery and intrigue, but—what is infinitely worse—the humiliating fact that these things are looked upon as matter of course, even made the recognized subject of sport and ridicule. The very laws which should guard against them are baffled and enfeebled through want of the support of public opinion. The very men who pass them are tempted, almost forced, virtually to break them.

3. But once more. Not only should our Christianity give spirit and purity to our political life, but it should also temper it by the sense of a deeper spiritual unity underlying all political divisions, and a spiritual purpose of life awakening a sacred enthusiasm, which politics can never stir. Conflicts in political life there must be: the existence of parties concentrating individual force is inevitable. But it concerns the welfare of every nation that there should be some power to rush in between the combatants, if ever their combat becomes deadly, and cry out, 'Sire, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?' Other such powers there are. There is the sense of our common loyalty and freedom; there is the sense not only of a common patriotism, but of a common human love of all that is true and pure and good; there is, as we see again and again in the fiercest political struggles, the bond of common sympathy with joy and sorrow which makes the whole world kin. But these are as nothing compared with the sense of a common Christianity; nay, beyond even this, the reverence for the humanity for which, even when it knows Him not, the One Saviour died.

¶ The Bible declares and history illustrates a purpose running through the ages of which the end is the establishment of a perfect humanity, held together by the bonds of peace and goodwill, and capable of enjoying to the full its capacity for admiration, hope and love. Nations with their national characteristics have been evolved to set forward this purpose, and each nation, by faithfulness to its own character or call, becomes a co-operator in the common purpose. Nations with their strong national feelings are, it may be said, the

[1] J. I. Vance, *Royal Manhood*, 203.
[2] Lady Astor, M.P.

instruments which have been evolved to establish peace upon earth.[1]

4. Nor is this all. For Christianity must also intervene, in the name of true spiritual individuality, to keep a man from such absorption in political drudgery or political excitement as may destroy his true humanity. When once a man realizes for himself that he has a present communion with God in Jesus Christ —when he has even a glimpse of what it means to have a part in that infinite future which stretches beyond the grave, in the unspeakable bliss which we call heaven—then surely he can never degenerate into the mere politician or the believer in the omnipotence of social science; he will never sacrifice the true humanity of himself or his brethren at the altar of party spirit or political success. For he must hear the Divine voice which says, 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.'

¶ Be always doing something serviceable to Mankind, and let this constant generosity be your only pleasure, not forgetting in the meantime a due regard to the Deity.[2]

5. Yet one other effect of Christianity on the political and social life may be noticed. It must keep men from that idolatry of patriotism which cares simply and solely for the wealth and the glory and the happiness of one's country, and forgets that these things, after all, are means and not ends; that they constitute, not a possession but a trust; that only in proportion as they subserve the true end, which is the good of all humanity and the glory of God, are they deserving of the highest enthusiasm, or indeed, capable of being commended in prayer to the righteous Providence of God. It is true that, as God has made us, we are bound to seek to serve Him chiefly through the service of our dear country. We acknowledge that those who forget it deserve the sneer which brands them as the friends of every nation but their own. But still it is Christianity which has actually created the sense of a brotherhood of nations, and of a true love of humanity. The days are gone when, as in old heathen times, the word 'foreigner' was synonymous with 'enemy,' and when, as under the old Jewish system, any one nation had a right to arrogate to itself the position of the chosen people of God. The true Christian who by political action has any power to shape the destinies of his country, whether in the peaceful conquests of commerce and higher civilization, or in the awful crisis of present or impending war, can never propose to himself any less object than that which was before the eyes of his Master—the redemption of all humanity from ignorance and misery and sin, and the regeneration of all nations to be parts of the great kingdom of Jesus Christ.

These things shall be—a loftier race
  Than e'er the world hath known, shall rise,
With flame of freedom in their souls,
  And light of knowledge in their eyes.

Nation with nation, land with land,
  Unarmed shall live as comrades free;
In every heart and brain shall throb
  The pulse of one fraternity.

New arts shall bloom, of loftier mould,
  And mightier music thrill the skies,
And every life shall be a song,
  When all the earth is paradise.[1]

Freedom in Christ.

1 Pet. ii. 16.—'As free, and not using your liberty (RV 'freedom') for a cloke of maliciousness (RV 'wickedness'), but as the servants (RV 'as bondservants') of God.'

These words recognize the use and the abuse of Christian liberty: they enforce the one, they condemn the other. 'As free'—that is the Christian's birthright: 'and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness,'—meaning thereby any evil purpose, and not exclusively that which we understand by *malice* —'but as the servants of God.' That is to say, however complete the emancipation of

[1] S. A. Barnett, *Religion and Politics*, 26.
[2] Marcus Aurelius.

[1] J. A. Symonds.

men through Christ may be, it does not interfere with the higher condition of service due to God.

Now man's freedom is exercised in three main departments of his life: in his life as a social being, or his *political* life; in his life as a thinking being, or his *intellectual* life; and in his life as a moral being, or his *spiritual* life. In each of these departments of human activity Christ has made man free.

1. It has often been alleged that, as a matter of fact, our Lord left the great despotisms of the world for a while untouched. Jesus Christ taught, He was crucified, He rose, He ascended. But the Cæsar Tiberius still sat upon the throne of the Roman world. There never was a more odious system of personal government than that of the Roman Emperors; the surviving forms of the extinct republic did but make the actual tyranny which had succeeded it more hard to bear. Yet it was of such an Emperor as Nero that St. Paul wrote, 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God'; and St. Peter, 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors,' that is, proconsuls and prætors, as they were termed, who 'are sent by him' into the provinces of the empire 'for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.' In the same way Apostles advise Christian slaves to give obedience to their masters as unto the Lord; to obey, not with eye-service, as if they had to do only as much as might be insisted on by a jealous owner, but with singleness of heart, as men who throw every energy into their work. It may be asked, How are such precepts and such advice compatible with the assertion that Christ gave us political freedom? The answer is that He gave us a moral force which did two things. First, it made every Christian independent of outward political circumstances, and, secondly, it made the creation of new civil institutions only a question of time. The slave who could not speak to a fellow-slave except when he was spoken to; who could not move as he would even once throughout the day; whose every look and gesture was regulated by an implacable etiquette; whose life was, at least during long periods of Roman history, entirely at the disposal of his owner, was yet, if a Christian, inwardly free. He had a sense of freedom, of power, of living according to the higher law of his being, which the Cæsar on his throne knew not of. It was enough for him, at least for the present, if he knew his own happiness and the will of his Lord. By and by the moral seed which had been sown would bear fruit in his emancipation; in new public institutions; in a changed face of the world. For it was not our Lord's part, like that of some agitators of the time, to promote a rising among the slaves, to rouse a province into resistance against the Roman power, to issue programmes for a political and social revolution. That would have been at issue with the blessed lessons of submission, tenderness, long-suffering, charity, which He came to teach. But His doctrine of the worth and dignity of redeemed men was like leaven introduced into the corrupt mass of human society; and in time the whole would be leavened politically, as in other ways.

2. But Christ gave men also intellectual freedom. It is undeniable that the religion of Christ gave an immense impulse to human thought. It made men think as they had never thought before. It made them feel what it is to have within this puny body a spirit that takes the measure of the spheres. When Christ, in all the glory of His Godhead and His Manhood, had enthroned Himself in the soul, He taught men to think worthily of the greatness of God and of the greatness of man, notwithstanding man's weakness and corruption. He freed men from all the narrow, cramping influences of local philosophies, of local teachers, of petty schemes and theories for classes and races. He led men out into the great highways of thought, where, if they would, they might know the Universal Father, manifested in His Blessed Son, as the Author of all existence, as its Object, and as its End.

We are asked whether, as a matter of fact, Christianity does not cramp intellectual liberty by insisting upon the necessity of

believing Christian doctrine; whether dogmatic Creeds, for instance, are not hostile to mental liberty. Certainly our Lord has given us a body of Truth which we can, if we like, reject, but which it is our happiness to believe. What He did for men in this way is embodied in His own teaching, in the writings of His Apostles, and in the Creeds of the Universal Church. These are to intellectual liberty what law is to social liberty. They protect, they do not cramp it. They furnish a fixed point from which thought may take wing. They do not enchain thought. If man would think steadily, fruitfully, he must begin with some solid, ascertained truth.

¶ The New Testament shows us plainly that Christianity involves a creed. Those who set themselves humbly and honestly to learn of Christ, as well as to follow Christ, are led into a common belief about Him. They discover that they are all in contact with one and the same Reality. It is true, indeed, that we often interpret our Lord as faultily as we imitate Him. We misunderstand the Truth just as we stumble in the Way. And so we ought to deal with errors in doctrine not less tenderly than we deal with frailties of conduct. The perfect creed is as rare as the perfect character. For an infallible theology we should need an impeccable Church. Nevertheless Christ does disclose to men definite facts about God and the universe and human nature. And His disciples learn to look at all things in a characteristic way. We learn to measure life and death, and the issues of life and death, by the measure of Christ Himself. We accept His words when He tells us what we cannot verify concerning the mysteries of the world to come. And when any truth in this world appears to our minds to be alien from Christ, we may take this for a token that the time is ripe for us to understand Christ better. Since no truth can be alien from the Divine Reason, whose Word was made flesh.[1]

3. Lastly, Christ has made men morally free. Whatever a Christian may be outwardly, he is inwardly a free man. In obeying Christ's law he acts as he desires to act: he acts according to this, the highest law of his life, because he rejoices to do so. He obeys law; the law of God. But then he has no inclination to disobey it. To him, obedience is not a yoke. Disobedience would be a torture. His inclinations are in accordance with his highest duty: that which emancipates him is itself a law. 'The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.' He is, as St. Peter says to us today, a servant of God; but then, as he would not for all the world be anything else, his service is perfect freedom.

The plea that the rules and laws of a Christian life are an infringement upon Christian liberty is only a way of making Christian liberty a cloke of maliciousness. The care of conscience, regular habits of devotion, system in doing good to others, and in the disposal of time, caution as to what passes in conversation, avoidance of bad company, precautions against temptation—these things are represented as inconsistent with freedom. Inconsistent they are with mere natural impetuosity, with a purely animal impatience of restraint, with that notion of human liberty which places it in the indulgence of the lower instincts and desires at the cost of the higher. True freedom, let us be sure, consists in the power of acting without hindrance according to the highest law of our being. To do wrong does not assert our liberty. It degrades, it enslaves us. It may have been necessary that we should have the power of doing wrong, in order to do right freely. But none the less we forfeit freedom, if we do aught but right. A man is not really more free because he steals, because he swears, because he murders. This false notion of liberty is its worst enemy. Our highest liberty is secured by our free and complete obedience to every detail of God's eternal law.

¶ Almost all men are slaves: they are mastered by foolish ambitions, vile appetites, jealousies, prejudices, the conventions and opinions of other men. These things obsess them, so that they cannot see anything in its right perspective. For most men the world is centred in self, which is misery: to have one's world centred in God is the peace that

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 179.

passeth understanding. This is liberty: to know that God alone matters.[1]

But there is yet a liberty, unsung
By poets, and by senators unprais'd,
Which monarchs cannot grant, nor all the pow'rs
Of earth and hell confed'rate take away:
A liberty, which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;
Which whoso tastes can be enslav'd no more.
'Tis liberty of heart, deriv'd from heav'n;
Bought with His blood who gave it to mankind,
And seal'd with the same token! It is held
By charter, and that charter sanction'd sure
By th' unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God! His other gifts
All bear the royal stamp that speaks them His,
And are august; but this transcends them all.[2]

Liberty and Licence.

1 Pet. ii. 16.—'As free . . . but as bond-servants.'

The watchword of the twentieth century is 'Liberty.' The peril of the twentieth century is licence. The problem of the twentieth century is how to use our liberty without letting our liberty become licence.

In a certain sense this has been the problem of every century since the birth of Christianity. The acceptance of the teaching of Christ involved emancipation on a large scale, and on a broad basis. It led to emancipation from the bondage of custom and tradition. It necessitated a broad outlook on the world instead of a narrow one. It involved emancipation from racial, social, and religious prejudices. It broadened the whole basis of religion. It bade the Jew look with sympathy and interest upon the Gentile. It taught him to look upon him as a brother, not as a pariah, and to realize with thankfulness that his welfare for this life and for the next was bound up with the welfare of his Gentile neighbour. It bade the Gentile approach the Jew with frankness and cordiality, and with the recognition of the blessings which the world enjoyed through the instrumentality of the Jewish race.

1. The teaching of Christ involved a moral emancipation. It meant all the incalculable difference that lies between a life directed and governed by rules and regulations, and a life directed and governed by principles instead of rules. It meant that there could be diversity of opinion and diversity of practice under the control of the same principles. It enjoined the direct reference of every difficulty in the life of the Christian, not to a religious statute-book, or to an ecclesiastical tribunal, but to the Divine Lord and Master Himself. It enforced the right of private judgment, and encouraged the direct access of the believer to the presence of his God. It meant the emancipation of the theologian from the bonds of traditionalism, of the worshipper from the burden of ceremonialism, of the outcast from social ostracism, of the woman from domestic slavery.

Christianity meant liberty on a large scale, and on a broad basis. And just because it meant all this, the danger of Christianity all through the ages has been the danger of her liberty degenerating into licence. There has always been the danger lest in the rejection of the shell of custom and tradition, of symbolism and ceremonialism, the kernel of truth might be cast aside; that with the cessation of sacrifice there might come the lessening of the consciousness of sin and the need for pardon; that freedom from the constraint of rules and regulations might lead to freedom from the restraint of the principles which they enshrined; that diversity of opinion might lead to indifference to truth; and that the enjoyment of the right of private judgment might encourage the notion that every man could be a law unto himself. There was the danger of the subject repudiating his relation to his rulers, of the servant forgetting his duties to his master, of the woman neglecting her duties to her husband and her home. Wherever this novel and invigorating principle of liberty entered, there entered at the

[1] Donald Hankey, *A Student in Arms*, i. 193.
[2] Cowper, *The Task*.

same time the danger of licence and lawlessness and laxity and excess.

2. The very same problem confronts us under new aspects in our land to-day. We live in an age of transition. It is an age full of thrilling interest, but an age full of insidious peril. There is on all sides a movement in the direction of a wider liberty, but there is a danger of that very liberty, which is a supremely good thing, degenerating into unbridled licence, which is a supremely bad thing. So the problem is confronting thoughtful men in every sphere of life, especially men who have in any degree the responsibility for moulding the thoughts and opinions of other men—the problem of how to enlarge and profit by our liberty without causing irreparable and irretrievable loss to national character, national ideals, national morals, and national religion.

(1) There is first of all the question of *the Lord's Day*. It is not hedged about with its old restrictions. It is not loaded with its old burdens. But is it not losing some of its old blessings? Is it not lacking the old quiet and rest and devotion and holy joy? Is not the liberty of the modern Sunday fast degenerating into a deadening, a soul-destroying licence? And yet it is far from easy to draw a hard-and-fast line, and to say that this is right on the Sunday, and that that is wrong. It is a matter which every Christian must decide for himself, in accordance with the dictates of his conscience and the principles of the New Testament.

¶ The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath, as Jesus emphatically declares. Ordinarily there are better things than work or play for Sunday. Rest, change, simple social intercourse, neighbourly helpfulness, reading, reflection, worship, prayer, are better for the individual and for society than a continuation of the labours and sports of the week days; and therefore Good Will invites to these Sabbath occupations all who seek its fullest fellowship in highest consecration. Not that work and play on that day are intrinsically and universally bad; or that the clerk or bookkeeper kept at his desk all the week should not have his game of golf or tennis on Sunday afternoon: but that friendliness and rest, meditation and worship are ordinarily better: that is the general ground on which Good Will claims that these better things shall have first place in our plans for Sabbath observance. Because a worshipful Sunday is helpful to that individual and social well-being which is the object of Good Will; and a secular Sunday is injurious to individual and social well-being; therefore the highest type of Christian will aim as a rule to put worship into his Sunday plans and keep distraction out.[1]

(2) There is, in the second place, *the sphere of home life*, involving the whole question of parental authority and discipline. Family relationships have become far less strict and far less defined in these days; a larger liberty has pervaded them, leading to a greater and an earlier independence. There have been gains in this changed condition of things; there have also been losses. It is undoubtedly a problem to many a parent how to train his children as they grow up from the years of early boyhood and girlhood; how far to enforce, to restrict, to prohibit; how to train his children to a healthy independence, without letting them drift into an unhealthy and demoralizing licence.

¶ Our prevalent lawlessness springs not simply from a breakdown of authority in the state, but from a breakdown of authority in the family. As another has put it, there is just as much authority in the family as there ever was, only the children exercise it. In saying this we do not need to make a weak and wistful appeal for the 'good old times.' The family life of older generations often had in it elements which we are fortunate to have escaped. Here, for example, is a letter written in 1803 by a Quaker lady, sending her brother Timothy to live with relatives in another town:

'*Esteemed Friend*: I send my brother Timothy to be under thy charge this winter, while he learns the store business. I know thee will be a faithful guardian, and though it grieveth me to unveil his faults, I must disclose them for thy friendly correction. I

[1] W. DeWitt Hyde, *The Gospel of Good Will*, 234.

have discovered in the lad a worldly and evil spirit, having heard him imitate the unprofitable forms of the light folk of this town—even saying "Mr. Jones" to old Friend Thomas Jones, and though only sixteen years old, he boldly and audaciously directed the woman who maketh his garments to alter their shape. These are bad signs, but I hope thee will prune away such sprouts of sin, and curb these longings after vanity. In other matters thee will find the lad obedient and correct. . . .

I shall be pleased to hear how thy family does, and also how brother Timothy conducts himself.

We do not mean to put him upon thee without compensation, and we are willing to pay a liberal board—say $1.50 a week, deducting .25 when he spends Sunday with his Uncle Caleb.

Wishing thee well, and all thy family . . .'

Not many of us would care to go back to such 'good old times.' Yet in the best of those old homes, from which some of us came, there was a kind of spiritual authority which we shall lose at our peril. One Saturday morning my father, leaving the house, said to my mother: 'You tell Harry that he can cut the grass to-day—if he feels like it.' Then after a few steps, he turned and added: 'Tell him that he would better feel like it.' Just so! The first part of those directions has had altogether too exclusive control of the training of the younger generation. They could do their duty if they felt like it. They could study, work, behave themselves—if they felt like it. It will be a sad day for our families and for the nation if we cannot recover that second emphasis: *they would better feel like it!* [1]

(3) There is, again, *the sphere of religious thought.* And here, once more, liberty is the order of the day. Men are thinking for themselves in these days, and it is good indeed that they are. They are refusing to be bound by the views of others, and authority in matters of faith is at a discount. It has its gains, has this orgy of religious liberty; but it has also its losses. Men are apt to believe anything that is new without pausing to discover whether it is true, and in religious belief what is new is but rarely true. And so, as a result, there is a babel of discordant voices and clashing creeds and competing churches, amidst which it becomes daily more difficult to rear and nourish the tender plant of a strong and simple faith.

¶ Of the late Sir Henry Acland, Professor of Medicine at Oxford, his biographer writes: 'At one time or another Acland had been brought into contact with many types of religious thought, and with many men to whom creeds and formularies were sounds of little meaning. He had come under the spell of Newman, he had been the friend of Pusey and Liddon, of Stanley, and of Maurice; he had known and honoured James Martineau; he was on cordial terms with Huxley and Tyndall. But the faith which consoled and strengthened him in his last years was the same simple belief which he had learned under his father's roof. Regular attendance at public worship and participation in the Holy Communion were to him not merely a sacred duty, they were a necessity of his existence. Broad-minded and tolerant to all, he was essentially a son of the Church of England: her prayers, her ordinances, her spirit were the very fibre of his being.' [1]

(4) There is, once more, *the sphere of our national life,* into which an ever-widening degree of liberty is entering. Institutions are ceasing to command respect merely because they are old and venerable and dignified. Scant reverence is paid to antiquity as such. That which is old is considered antiquated. That which is venerable is often put down as effete. The cry is all for change, for freedom, for elasticity, for the removal of the brakes which check the pace of the chariot of progress. Many are the gains which we thankfully acknowledge. Many are the reforms which we hail with delight. But there are times when we put the question to ourselves, and know not how to answer it, 'With all this progress and enlightenment and liberty, is our nation becoming better, our people happier, our national influence nobler, our service to humanity greater, our national character holier? Is there not a real and

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character,* 116.

[1] *Henry Acland,* 499.

pressing danger lest every fresh access of national liberty may lead to a fresh loss of national character and grit and godliness?'

¶ Compare the modern Egyptian with his far-off ancestor, according to what we read of him in perhaps the oldest book in the world, 'The Precepts of Pta-ho-Tep.' This book, at the time of the fifth dynasty, is full of the highest morality, where special stress is laid on the vital importance of training children, and of making a son a true gentleman! And have we Christians got far ahead of those Essene communities whom Josephus and Philo describe for us; who laboured in agriculture for their subsistence, who practised the strictest temperance; of whom we read: 'Here everyone is master of his passions and a friend of peace. In all their work the brethren obey the directions of their superiors; only acts of kindness and mercy are left to their own discretion. Truthfulness in every word is strictly enjoined; they bind themselves to honour God, to practise righteousness towards men, always to hate the unrighteous and to help the righteous, to be faithful in their relations with all'? The world has moved since then towards vaster things than Egyptian or Essene ever conceived. Nevertheless, our modern society, in contemplation of such habits of life, might well turn to the recovery of some of these lost ideals instead of boasting itself overmuch.[1]

3. From the earliest days of the faith all this was realized. The teaching of Christ itself contained the safeguard, both direct and indirect, against the very dangers which He foresaw would be the inevitable accompaniment of the new and wide and vigorous life that His followers were to live. And under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the New Testament writers, one after another, quite independently, and yet with striking harmony, elaborated, enforced, and applied those very safeguards to the various classes and sections of the different communities to which they addressed their letters. Whether it was St. Peter or St. Paul, St. John, St. James, or St. Jude, we find that each alike utters strong and earnest words of exhortation and warning in view of the dangers which beset the exercise of their newly found liberty. 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake,' says St. Peter, 'whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty as a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.' Liberty is the keynote throughout, but it is liberty restrained by submission and obedience, constrained by honour and by love. It is liberty, used not as a cloke of maliciousness, as the deceptive covering of an evil heart, but as the expression of a disposition that is honourable and honouring, an attitude of reverent fear towards God, and love towards man. It is liberty restrained from becoming licence by the fear of God, governed by the will of God, controlled for the sake of God, and conditioned by the service of God.

In this, and in many a similar passage, we have the antidote to the poison of licence. Here are the principles with which the early missionaries of the Cross instructed their newly-formed communities of believers, and which they everywhere applied to the new relationships which the faith of Christ established between rulers and ruled, between masters and servants, between men and their fellow-men.

[1] J. Brierley, *The Secret of Living*, 211.

A Precious Cluster.

1 Pet. ii. 17.—'Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.'

St. Peter lays down for us in these verses the conditions of political and social freedom. He begins by telling us that as Christians we are absolutely and inalienably free. 'Liberty,' as Archbishop Leighton says in his beautiful commentary on this Epistle, which is one of the glories of English theology, 'Liberty is Christ's livery, that He gives to all His followers.' Christ came to make us free. He

made us free from the law. That is to say, the Christian eschews the evil and chooses the good, not from fear of breaking some arbitrary prohibition, but from love of God, and love of man, and love of the beauty of holiness, which Christ has shown us. Love makes all burdens light. Therefore Christ can tell us that His yoke is easy. Therefore it can be said of Him, 'If the truth shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' Therefore the beautiful collect can say, 'To know God is to live; to serve Him is to reign.'

For our freedom in Christ is also service. It is the very strictest service, for it binds not only our actions but our words, and not only our words but our thoughts. We are to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. There is a paradox here, but the solution of it is that in obeying Christ we are obeying our own best selves, that hidden man of the heart which is Christ in us. It is only when the law of our mind subdues and drives out the law of sin and death that we are truly ourselves, because we are truly Christ's. When the prodigal came to himself he said, 'I will arise and go to my father.' It is love that works this wondrous transformation, love which over-leaps the limits of individuality and which makes us one in perfect sympathy and unity of will.

Then follows the 'precious cluster of Divine precepts,' as Leighton calls them: 'Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.'

1. *Honour all men.*—This is the law of Christian democracy, the principle of Christian courtesy. It is very much more important than 'One man, one vote.' The citizens of a democracy may despise, hate, and distrust each other, and they often do, but Christian democracy bids us 'honour all men,' not as citizens, but as men and women. We are to 'honour all men,' because all men are made in the image of God, and that image has never been wholly effaced, even in the worst and meanest. To quote Leighton again, 'Trample not on any. There may be some work of grace there that thou knowest not. The name of God may be written on that soul thou treadest on. It may be a soul that Christ thought so much of as to give His precious blood for it. Therefore despise it not.' Social arrogance is wholly wrong, whether based on rank, or money, or intellect.

> Surely this piece of gold
> Not out of sight hath rolled.
> God's image on it set
> It never shall forget.
> He that doth seek hath power
> To find and raise and scour:
> It shall be spent in His good service yet.[1]

2. *Love the brotherhood.*—The brotherhood means the Church, or, rather, all Christians. 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye have love one to another.' 'See how these Christians love one another' was the comment of the pagans at the time when the Church was a persecuted body. There is no lack of exhortation now to make more of our corporate life, to feel and realize our membership of the Church. But St. Peter meant not so much 'Love the Church' as 'Love your fellow-churchmen.' Some people find the one easy and the other difficult, but no doubt he meant to remind us that over and above the honour which we owe to all men there is a special tie which binds the members of the body of Christ together.

¶ It may be asked—Why is any one asked to enter the Church? Why is any one born into a family? For this one reason in both cases—that the life of that individual might be perfected, enriched, ennobled, and disciplined in a larger life. What a little thing is the one solitary individual life! But when it becomes partaker of a larger life, and shares its vitality and power, what a life it becomes! It becomes perfected.

In the visible world living things are all organic and dead things are inorganic. The principle of organic life is that every part of the body is sharing in the larger life of the whole body, is quickened and made vital and lives for the life of the whole body. That is why we become members of a Church: that we may share the large full blessing and triumphant life of the whole body.

[1] F. Langbridge.

The higher the life the higher the organism, and the highest life is that of the eternal Son of God, who has made the Church to be His body. An organism in which His own life fulfils its functions must be the most perfect in the universe—the body of the Lord. Let there be wise generalship, skilful combination, trained service, and so let there be splendid compact unity in the Church.[1]

3. *Fear God.*—Do we fear God as our forefathers feared Him? That fear has almost dropped out of our religion. We will not hear hell mentioned, not so much because we are so very humane as because we do not think that we or anyone else deserves severe punishment. But should we not remember that the fear of God is almost as prominent in the New as in the Old Testament. You remember our Lord's impressive warning, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but . . . fear him which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell.' It is true that 'he that feareth is not made perfect in love,' but which of us is anywhere near being made perfect in love? If we have lost our thought of God as an all-just and all-holy Judge who will call us to strict account for all service done and left undone, then we must try to restore this most necessary feeling. 'The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom'; the love of God is wisdom full grown.

¶ There are crowds of people who in the general conduct of their lives behave as if God were absent or extinct. Men who are temperate and clever and refined steadily shut their eyes to things eternal. Students explore the order of nature and unravel the courses of history, but they discern no Will that moulds it, no Heart that beats through it all. Artists interpret the glory of the world's loveliness, with no vision of Him who is the First and Only Fair. And in daily life we meet multitudes of secular persons who go on week after week doing their work, laying their plans, making their money, enjoying their pastimes, without any serious thought of their Maker, their Lover, their Judge; without any concern for that strict and solemn account which they must render Him at last.[1]

4. *Honour the king.*—We are to be good subjects and good citizens. We are to obey the law. We are to submit to that voluntary discipline without which no free nation can exist. We are to subordinate, not only our own interests, but those of our class to the general good, and we are to resist all the tendencies that make the nation a house divided against itself. If the country is to be more democratic than before, we must treat our public men properly, or we shall end by getting the sort that we deserve. And we must check by all means that violent partisanship which is the curse of democracies. If one excited and bigoted partisan is liable to commit faults and crimes, the same obsession may produce the same results with crowds. 'Honour the king.' Respect the government of your country, and make a conscience of every act in which you exercise your duty as a citizen.

Loving some men, honour all,
  Be their station proud or mean;
Who art thou that thou shouldst call
  Any 'common or unclean'?

Love thy brothers; all are nigh,
  Some are nearer than the rest;
Ere our Brother went to die
  One was leaning on His breast.

Fear thy God: that fear alone
  Makes us simple children wise:
Fear lies prostrate at His throne;
  Love supplants it in the skies.

Honour kings: they hold their sway
  From our King who reigns above;
Fear and honour pave the way
  Leading to the throne of Love.[2]

[1] *John Brown Paton*, 497.

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 199.
[2] F. Cornish, *Week by Week*, 49.

An Address to Scouts.

1 Pet. ii. 17.—'Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.'

THESE four words describe the movement in which you are honoured by having a part. It is a great movement, it is good to remember that. It does not mean, it cannot mean—it is never going to mean—rivalry, competition, desire to separate, or difference of principle. The whole movement is one in spirit, purpose, principle, and, we hope, in method and plan. Ever since there came to one distinguished soldier the idea, which was more than an idea—an inspiration—which resulted in thousands of Boy Scouts throughout the land, the movement has grown by strides, by leaps and bounds. It is a great movement, and therefore there is a great responsibility for its leaders (the Scout-master must see to his own life and example), and a great privilege and honour for those allowed to belong to it.

It is not enough, however, to be big; is it strong as well? You ask that of a movement as of a man. Size is not everything. A great, powerful-looking man may have within him the seeds of weakness and disease. Sometimes we see a great building rising day by day in beauty, higher and higher, stone on stone, stage on stage; it is wonderful, and it looks strong. Yet someone says, 'Yes; it is big, but is it really strong? What are the foundations? Will it stand the beating of the rain, the rushing of the wind, the violence of the storm, the stress and strain of the centuries? Will it last?' Some people are asking that of our movement. It is big, and it is going to be bigger, but will it last? What foundations does it rest upon? This fourfold word of command describes what we wish to make it. What we want, besides numbers and skilful scouting, are the four marks of the true Scout: Courtesy, Brotherhood, Patriotism, God. 'Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.'

1. *Courtesy,* helpfulness, consideration for others, respect and honour for all. A true Scout is bound to help other people at all times and by all means; to honour all in the best of all possible ways. It is not easy for everybody to do this. It is easy to honour some people; it is possible to honour no one. There is not too much of the bump of reverence nowadays; people do not always honour those older, greater, or wiser than themselves. It is said that hero-worship is dying out among English boys, that the names of great men are not honoured words to-day. If that is true, it is very bad for England and English boys, for it is bad not to look up. It means that you look round and you look down, but you do not do what it is the glory of man to be capable of doing. I think, however, that most of you do look up to someone higher than yourselves, not only to God who is at the top of the ladder of your life. You do honour some—a great king who has ruled his people well; a great statesman who has left his mark; a great general who has saved his country; a great discoverer who has planted her flag on a new shore. You honour some, but the text says, 'Honour *all,*' not only the successful, brilliant, distinguished, active, good, but all—the dull, weak, sad, downtrodden, the people the world says are worthless, the boy who seems no good, the 'waster,' as we call him—that is not so easy, and yet the true Scout has to try and do it. Be considerate, polite, helpful, thoughtful, because in everybody there is something worth honouring. If you look in the rain-pool long enough you will see a reflection of the blue sky or a gleam of sun; and in the most stupid, useless, uninteresting lad, the one who has least in common with yourself, you will find something to make him worth thinking about and honouring. An artist once said, 'There is an angel in that block of marble,' and presently with his mallet and chisel he showed people what he meant by carving a beautiful figure out of it. There is a touch of the angel in everybody; and we may make the best of people and not the worst by always being polite and courteous, and helpful and considerate.

2. *Brotherhood,* 'Love the brotherhood.' All Scouts are brothers. When we say the words of the great prayer 'Our Father,' we

remind ourselves that there is a brotherhood larger than that of the Scouts; for all who own the same Father must be brothers. The Christian Church is one great brotherhood, but there are special brotherhoods too. Boys who have been at the same school are bound by a link to each other; a regiment is a real brotherhood, all are concerned with the honour of the whole; and a patrol or troop of Scouts is a brotherhood, where no one is allowed to feel neglected or alone. This movement is a big brotherhood, and if we are not brothers we have no right to a place in it. 'Every Scout is a brother to every other Scout'; no Scout is living for himself, fighting for himself, caring only how fast and how far he can get on his own; the whole movement is a great and glorious brotherhood. We must strain every nerve to help not only by words, but by example and influence, to make and keep it so.

During the Boer War a young officer, who was leading his men to an attack, fell wounded with a bullet through his lungs. His Colonel came to see him, and asked if there was anything he could do for him. 'Yes, Sir,' he said, 'you can send my love to my mother, and say the Lord's Prayer with me; but first of all tell me, did I lead those men quite straight?' What a question for every one of you! Not, do I belong to this or that patrol, but what sort of brother am I? What example am I setting? Am I going myself and leading others 'quite straight'?

3. *Patriotism*, loyalty, 'Honour the king.' A Scout cares for other people, honours all men, loves the brotherhood; and a true Scout also loves his country and honours his Sovereign; he is a citizen, subject, and patriot. 'Honour the king.' That does not mean only waving of flags and shouting of songs about war and fighting, though waving of flags has often meant more than that—it has meant duty, self-sacrifice, unselfishness, courage. But 'Honour the king' means more still—to know your country, love your country, serve your country. To know your country, not only the city in which you live, or the part of it near your home, but the vastness of the Empire to which you belong, and in which God has been good enough to place you. Be ready to serve your country; not to ask, what will my country do for me, but what can I now, and when I grow to manhood, do for my country? That is patriotism, loyalty; aim at it, Scouts.

4. Then welcome to the greatest of all the four words of command; on it the other three depend; it is the hinge on which they turn. '*Fear God.*' You cannot do the rest unless you fear Him. Not in the sense of being afraid of God. Afraid of the kindest, tenderest Friend a boy has? No, but reverence Him, think about Him, acknowledge Him, obey Him not less than you obey your Scoutmaster; work, play, scout, feeling all the time that you are in His Presence, that His eye is on you, not to pick out your faults but to see the good in you. Fear God! It all depends on that. We 'honour all men' because they are made in the image of God (it is true we do not see much of it, some people are like badly developed photographs, smirched and spoiled pictures); we 'love the brotherhood' for we have one Father; we 'honour the king' because God has taught us to do it; our country is great because God has helped it to be great; and there is one word above all the rest, 'Fear God.'[1]

Reasons for Honouring Men.

1 Pet. ii. 17.—'Honour all men.'

THE one unpardonable sin is that of cynicism, of contempt for man as man. There was published some time ago, by a Japanese long domiciled in England, the story of his childhood. In it he records how he once went to a teacher whom he respected, in order to confide in him his ambitions. The teacher sneered and laughed at the eager boy. The author waxes eloquent in his indignation. 'Murder I can forgive, for it may be the result of sudden passion. Murder is the killing of the flesh. But sneering is the killing of the soul; never can I forgive the man who sneers.' It is remarkable how close this is to Christ's own

[1] F. E. Ridgeway, *Calls to Service*, 117ff.

view, 'Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.' It was not of the words Christ was thinking; it was the contempt for and sneer at man that was unpardonable. The fine product of Bushido would find his justification in the noblest and most honourable gentleman that ever lived; for to honour all men was the principle on which He always acted.

1. The first and plainest sanction was for St. Peter, and still is for us, the example of Jesus Christ. Not only in the infinite wonder of His self-abasement, His suffering and death for all men; not only in that supreme, astounding sign how 'dear in the sight of the Lord' are the souls of all; not only in the sacredness inseparable from the nature which He took and wore; but in all His bearing among men, all His dealings with them, all His words and works in the days of His humiliation, we see that we must honour all men if we would follow Him. Think of His painstaking and sustained considerateness for all with whom He had to do; they might be slow and inconsistent and disappointing, but He never despised them, never lost patience with them, never hurried on the issue or foreclosed the probation. Think of the value He attached to every better trait in men's mixed characters; how carefully He rescued it from all that defaced and distorted it, as one who laboriously clears some precious fragment of antiquity from the traces of misuse that have nearly spoilt it, and that hide its worth from less skilled eyes. Think of the regard, the forbearance, the watchfulness, with which He taught men as they were able to bear it; tempering the light for them, waiting on the growth of their capacity; never overbearing their freedom or ignoring the processes by which their minds must really make the truth their own. He honoured men also in the very sternness that He sometimes used towards them; for there is nothing more dishonouring than to meet men with a low standard, to expect little of them, to take their failure as a matter of course. And then His high and undiscouraged hope for men is shown in the care, the distinct, peculiar tenderness, with which He restored those who had fallen away. It may well be that, as St. Peter spoke of the duty of honouring all men, he especially recalled how gently Christ had dealt with him when he had lapsed into sins for which the world reserves its most confident and indignant scorn. Bragging, cowardice, desertion, falsehood—men feel secure in lavishing contempt on these; we think we can hardly be asked to retain honour or reverence for a man who has so sinned against all self-respect; especially if in the past we ourselves have shown him trust or friendship. Yet there is no hint of slighting or dishonour, of lowered hope or trust withdrawn, as He whose perfect love St. Peter had so met restores him to his place among the Apostles, the stewards of His mysteries, the witnesses of His resurrection. Surely, if we want to treat men as Christ treated them, to guide our words and deeds by His example, we must gain more reverence for all men; for in the story of His life we shall not find our warrant for despising anyone.

¶ The 'high-minded man,' according to Aristotle, 'justly despises' others and is 'ashamed of receiving a benefit.' Jesus let women minister to him of their substance, and accepted it as natural and friendly that his disciples should row while he slept, but there is in every syllable of his teaching, in every movement of his mind, that recognition of God's interest in the meanest of men, which is the antithesis of contempt. The definition of a gentleman as one who never puts his feelings before the rights of others, or his rights before their feelings, is quite in his vein. The gravamen of rudeness is its suggestion that the other man does not matter, and is uninteresting. Jesus made every man interesting by bringing out that God is interested in him. He himself found something attractive or of importance in every man; he had a genius for appreciation and he conveyed it to those who caught his mind. If eminent Christians have sometimes lacked it, it has, perhaps, been because they were too eminent to be quite Christian.[1]

[1] T. R. Glover, *Jesus in the Experience of Men*, 228.

2. Again, for St. Peter the great light that broke on all things when he knew that Christ was risen may have made it seem a demand that needed no explanation or defence. For how could it be hard or strange to honour all men, when for them the issues, hopes, and interests of life had undergone the immeasurable change that came with the certainty of that triumph over death and wrong? It is difficult, perhaps it is impossible, for us to realize the transforming power that rushed over the world of thought and feeling in the joy of seeing, greeting, touching, talking with Him who was dead; of knowing Him to be indeed alive for evermore. With that experience—so surprising, vivid, and engrossing—there was no exaggeration in declaring that all things had become new. And as that change passed over all things, nothing, surely, underwent so splendid a transformation as the estimate of a human soul, and of its meaning, purpose, promise. For the radiance of that great disclosure swept away the clouds that had hung heaviest on men's hopes and efforts—the slavish fear of death, and the maddening sense of helplessness under oppression. 'How dieth the wise man? Even as the fool.' Yea, 'that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other.' And again, 'I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there'; 'And, behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter.' If that were true—if that were, or could be, all the truth—then it would be hard indeed sometimes to keep at bay the thoughts which mock at human life, till its highest aspirations, enterprises, sacrifices, seem ridiculous or pitiful; the thoughts that dwell on its ugly, disastrous, wasteful-seeming bits, and make men doubt how that can be honoured which is so disfigured, and abortive, and precarious, and dark. If the mastery of death were unbroken; if insolence and injustice could triumph unrebuked; if, above all, the perfect life, the purest love, were left to end in sheer and dismal failure, then, indeed, the worst that could be said to disparage the lot of humanity might scarcely be confuted. 'But now is Christ risen from the dead'; and courage and high effort need no longer fear that at the end of this life they must simply drop down at the blank wall of death. The real attainments of the soul, the brightness, strength, and beauty it has been gaining—these are not lost like flowers thrown into a grave, or paintings on a crumbling wall. If this world, this life, are only fragments, and disordered fragments, of love's whole vast work, then patience may be better than prosperity; the highest aim may be in truth the soberest; there may be no real treasures save those which will be reckoned such where Christ is; there may be for all men a calling, a task, a future, such as well may make us honour them.

3. A third reason lies behind the rule. St. Peter lived in daily contact with those who were made pure and strong and holy by the grace of God. He saw, indeed, how low men could sink in lust and cruelty; he saw the monstrous vices of a corrupt, licentious civilization; he took account of all that. But in the midst of such things he saw again and again a strange growth; he saw forms of moral splendour springing up and surpassing all that men had thought possible. Out of the very depths of the wickedness around him there came characters that he could watch only with silent astonishment and joy. From widely diverse states of life they came; they passed through many forms of trial and discipline and temptation; but in them was fulfilled their Master's promise, 'Nothing shall by any means hurt you'; they turned to His praise the fierceness of men; all the wrong that could be done them only led them on to a simpler, brighter patience, a more thorough self-committal to the love of God. And this thrilling wonder of spiritual beauty was what God could make of human nature. These had been like other men, like other women; and God had wrought this in them, and He might work this in others also. Yes, this, and more than this; for the work was not finished yet; it did not yet appear what they should be;

there were heights of perfectness yet undisclosed and inconceivable. Who, then, could refuse to honour all men, since of all he might have hope that God would yet achieve, might even now be secretly preparing, such a work in them?

That great appeal for patience and reverence towards all men, that protest alike against scorn at their failure and against acquiescence in it, may have come home with peculiar clearness to the Christians of that first age, with its sharp contrasts, its sudden glories, its plain issues, its absorbing love; to them it may have been among the fixed points that govern conduct, the principles that men need not consciously recall before they act on them—but is it wanting or uncertain now for us? Surely it need not be. It is a blundering and shallow study of experience that gets from it a disbelief in goodness and a scornful view of men. We may wonder at the strange physical theories which in bygone ages the facts of nature were supposed to warrant; and yet the facts of life are still misread with quite as much partiality and eccentricity. We may have much to discover of the depth and awfulness of sin, of the weakness of will, the deformity of conscience, the hard-heartedness that sin can work: but it will be our own fault if we do not also find with increasing clearness, and read with steadier certainty, the tokens of the power that is ever beating evil back; the power that reasserts through human goodness man's true claim to honour; the power that bears in itself the pledge of final victory. We may gladly and sincerely 'honour all men' as we meet them and deal with them even in the hurried and conventional ways of ordinary life, since in all that secret growth may be astir, and we may be nearer than we can imagine to 'the Spirit of glory and of God.'

Great Master! teach us how to hope in man.
We lift our eyes upon his works and ways,
And disappointment chills us as we gaze,
Our dream of him so far the truth outran,
So far his deeds are ever falling short.
And then we fold our graceful hands, and say,
'The world is vulgar.' Didst Thou turn away,
O Sacred Spirit, delicately wrought!
Because the humble souls of Galilee
Were tunèd not to music of Thine own,
And chimed not to the pulsing undertone
Which swelled Thy loving bosom like a sea?
Shame Thou our coldness, most Benignant Friend,
When we so daintily do condescend.[1]

Hindrances to Honouring Men.

1 Pet. ii. 17.—'Honour all men.'

WHY do we not honour all men?

1. Because of the barrier of *wealth*. Wealth honours wealth; income pays respect to income; but it is wont to cherish, in its secret heart, an unmeasured contempt for poverty. This barrier is apt to be raised to a great height by the successful classes in a commercial country, till at last wealth comes to be almost identified with virtue, and poverty with vice. If it were meant only that labour which produces wealth is virtue, and that idleness which creates poverty is vice, there would be no ground for dissent. But the feeling of a plutocracy is something very different from this; it is the possession of wealth and of the social power which is conferred by wealth, that constitutes, according to this standard, the title to honour. To believe that a man with £60 a year is just as much deserving of respect as a man with £6000 you must be seriously a Christian. A philosophical estimate of men and things is not really proof against the inroads of the sentiment which makes the possession of mere income the standard of honour. The honour of income, as distinct from and opposed to the honour of man, is still a real antagonist, which disputes the ground inch by inch with the ethics of the gospel.

¶ Johannesburg, far south, is probably the best and certainly the biggest of these African artificial agglomerations of mankind. The city is built high on the reef, and, at night, its miniature Oxford Street is ablaze with many small Selfridges. Yet all the time you have

[1] Martha P. Lowe.

thousands of natives, down a mile deep in the dark caves working away to the glimmer of their lamps. Picture the contrast: the outside glare and glitter of the street, and the never-needless negro, far below it all, drilling and blasting in the ghostly gloom. Some of the company-promoting gentlemen who emerge from these mining enterprises with a fat dividend could no more copy these blacks than milk the cow that jumped over the moon. But these good fellows of the Corner House are at least frank, and their Parktown across the reef has no hypocrisy about its intentional isolation. Mark that phrase about Parktown being 'across the reef'; I use these last three words with intention. It tickles you to see that same reef of gold still separating the rich and poor by night, the self-same reef of gold that all day, every day, is a barrier in business relations. Other cities politely put their poor in the East and hedge off patricians in the West, but here you have a frank and fashionable Johannesburg building on a reef of gold; then, on either side of the barrier reef, sorting out scientifically 'The Haves' and 'The Have Nots.'[1]

2. A second barrier is the *spirit of station or of class*, whether founded upon success in life, or upon the circumstances of birth. That an aristocracy has, in God's providential government of society, distinct and great functions to perform is a position which is not to be denied; since the experience of history seems to show that society creates a higher class by a natural process. And we know how largely such a class may, if it will, serve its country. But when it develops an exclusive spirit which divides humanity into two sections, those within and those without the imaginary barrier, it comes into collision with the teaching of the gospel. This spirit is frequently found in its greatest intensity not so much among those who succeed to high station by the inheritance of birth as among those who have secured it, whether by unforeseen circumstances, or by secret influence, or by personal exertion, and who too often have seemed to view indulgence in self-assertion as the real charm of their new position. But in any case such a spirit is a repudiation of man's true title to honour. The Divine Image, expressed in man's intelligence and freedom; the Atoning Blood, giving the measure of man's preciousness in the eyes of God; the glorified Manhood of Jesus, revealing to man his capacity for glory—these are the privileges of no class or station; they are the right and the possession of humanity.

¶ Rose told a story one night which amused Father Payne immensely. He had been up in town, and had sat next a minister's wife, who had been very confidential. She had said to Rose that her husband had just been elected into a small dining-club well known in London, where the numbers were very limited, the society very choice, and where a single negative vote excluded a candidate. 'I don't think,' said the good lady, 'that my husband has ever been so pleased at anything that has befallen him, not even when he was first given office—such a distinguished club—and so exclusive!'

Father Payne laughed loud and shrill. 'That's human nature at its nakedest!' he said. 'It's like Miss Tox, in *Dombey and Son*, you know, who, when Dombey asked her if the school she recommended was select, said, "It's exclusion itself!" What people love is the power of being able to *exclude*—not necessarily disagreeable people or tiresome people, but simply people who would like to be inside—

Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.

Those are the two great forces of society, you know—the exclusive force, and the inclusive force; the force that says, "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers"; and the force which says, "The more the merrier." The exclusive force is represented by caste and class, by gentility and donnishness, by sectarianism and nationalism, and even by patriotism—and the inclusive force is represented by Walt Whitmanism and Christianity.'[1]

3. A third barrier is that of *race or country*. Patriotism, no doubt, has its providential purpose; and the instinct of race is but an expan-

[1] Dan Crawford, *Back to the Long Grass*, 50.

[1] A. C. Benson, *Father Payne*, 309.

sion of the instinct of the family. Both are based upon a natural foundation and have a Divine sanction; but in their exaggeration both may foster sentiments which are crimes against humanity. And physiology and philology are implored to bring their reluctant succour to the instinct of exclusion, by pronouncing that this or that race of men is a race of essentially distinct animals, with whom it is impossible to deal as being seriously members of the human family. It is only one step further to deny to such races all human rights, to handle them as property that may be bought and sold, to treat them as we treat the animals around us, to bid them consider it their noblest privilege to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to our higher necessities. Against this inhuman, this accursed spirit the Church of Jesus must ever utter her emphatic protest. She must ever brave the cynicism and contempt of those who would honour not man, but mere material civilization and organized society and pride of race. She must ever range herself side by side with the lowest types, so to term them, of the human family; and, in her Master's name, bid the races who are what they are only in consequence of the training which she has lavished on them for centuries learn the full meaning of the Creation and of the Cross, and 'honour all men.'

¶ Martyn annoyed the General 'by what I said about the natives.' In those days of preposterous superiority the chaplain dared to believe that 'these men are not all fools, and that all ingenuity and clearness of reasoning are not confined to England and Europe.' I seem to feel that these descendants of Ham are as dear to God as the haughty sons of Japheth.'[1]

4. *The absence of intelligence* is often held to constitute a fourth barrier against this honour of man as man. Many who are indifferent to wealth and station cannot bring themselves to respect the unintellectual. Dullness is the one heresy which merits excommunication. Brilliancy, even the most superficial, is like the charity of the New Testament; it avails to cover a multitude of sins. If, indeed, by the honour of intelligence be meant the honour paid to cultivation of the mental faculties, such honour is in the highest sense legitimate, since it is really paid to those moral qualities which are inseparable from work. Only it ought also in consistency to be paid to the peasant who cannot read, and who day by day earns an honest livelihood by the sweat of his brow. If by intelligence be meant the original gift of God's image in reason, talent, or genius, which has been developed in this case by opportunities, while in that case it has lain unavoidably dormant, the honour paid to it is really paid to the opportunities, not to the endowment itself. The lowest savages possess in an undeveloped form the powers which charm the most cultivated minds in Europe; and if the original endowment be the object of honour, it should be honoured whether it be developed or not. To make intelligence, in the sense of cultivated intellect, the real test of a claim to honour would secure such honour to Voltaire, and (may we not add?) to Satan, while denying it to the Apostles of Christ. To make intelligence, in the sense of the common faculty which is capable of reflecting on self and of knowing God, the ground of that claim is to own that a debt of honour is due to the whole human family.

¶ Intellect is a sort of brute force; the whole question is how you are going to use it; and that question has to be answered from something beyond the mental. The unconscious judgment of the world here has expressed itself in the conception of the devil as a first-class intellect—and as bad as he can be. The world has had some brilliant understudies of him in these respects which go to confirm the idea. You cannot decide whether a man is going to be a blessing or a curse by the size of his brain. Of itself it may be so much force off the rails—a blind, devastating force. A man may have a superb calculating faculty, a genius for combination, a fascinating eloquence, and it may serve the spirit of a buccaneer. There have been men of that kind in abundance. Let anyone, for instance, study the Renaissance period in Italy. It is like looking into a midnight thunder-storm. At every point there are lightning-flashes of won-

[1] Constance E. Padwick, *Henry Martyn*, 180.

drous genius, which serve only to reveal the more vividly the blackness of the moral depravity. On the throne of the Vatican we see Alexander VI., the Borgia, living in abominable relations with his daughter Lucretia—the official representative of Christ committing every crime that was possible to man. We see Benvenuto Cellini doing matchless work as an artist, and then describing with gusto his debaucheries, his murders. Machiavelli writes his 'Prince,' in which he instructs rulers in the whole science of despotism and devilry. Never were there more brilliant brains or blacker hearts.[1]

Brotherhood.

1 Pet. ii. 17.—'Love the brotherhood.'

Man is essentially and emphatically a social being. No one stands alone, and no one lives to himself. We are each of us as much a part of the great encircling sphere of humanity as every drop of water in the ocean is part of the mighty deep. There is this difference, however, between the human race and the sea: the ocean is one vast extent of water in which there is no variety or sub-division; but the ocean of humanity is composed of many varieties and sub-divisions, which bear the same relation to the unity of the human race as the members of our own body to our individual personal unity. The tree is one, although made up of root and trunk, of branch and leaf; and the tree itself is part of that larger whole we call the Universe. This unity of the race is the basis of the brotherhood of man, but this brotherhood is not a description or a definition only, indicating within what bounds we have our corporate existence; it carries with it certain privileges and duties which ought to be respected and preserved in every subordinate unity to which we may belong.

Let us look at some of the smaller brotherhoods within the larger area of the race. A consideration of these will help us more fully to understand the nature of the Divine brotherhood which the words of the text command us to love.

[1] J. Brierley, *Religion and To-Day*, 80.

1. The first social institution, both in time and in importance, is unquestionably the *family*. Up till now it has run parallel with the human race, and, notwithstanding certain mutterings in some quarters against its continuance, it will hold its own so long as humanity endures. The family has its root in the very constitution of society. It has within itself all the elements of endurance. Here children are born and reared, educated and governed; and the ends for which the family exists are attained when the children reach maturity, assume the duties of parentage and become reputable members of society, fearing God and honouring the King.

2. The next organization that claims attention is the *State*, which has its root in Nature, and therefore has all the elements of perpetuation and endurance. The State has its specific functions as well as the family, and there is no reason why these should ever conflict. But the State has some inborn tendencies to aggression. In the past it has not scrupled occasionally to invade the domestic circle and trample on the rights of conscience; but within its own proper sphere it has important duties to discharge. Among these may be mentioned the protection of life and property, the maintenance of justice between man and man, and the removal of all unnecessary obstacles in the path of individual and social progress. It lies within its province to see that the poor are not crushed under the weight of social burdens, that the weak and infirm are not thrust aside to languish and die. The ideal State stands for liberty, civilization, and progress; and when any one becomes corrupt through luxury and the deterioration of morals, the God of nations removes it from its sphere of influence, and not infrequently confers the working out of the Divine purpose on a people whom the world has not hitherto known.

3. Outside the national brotherhood there are many and diversified *associations*, mostly of a voluntary character, such as trade unions, literary associations, commercial guilds, and political parties, whose aims and methods are

to be judged by an ethical standard and by their scrupulous adherence to the limits their own constitution imposes. The stability and success of democratic government depend largely upon the wisdom and the moderation in which these voluntary combinations of citizens are conducted and governed.

Socialism aims at a brotherhood of equal opportunity and economic equality, and for that purpose would make the State the proprietor of all accumulated wealth and the instrument of all productions. It professes to be based on the sentiment of universal brotherhood, and it wages war against the violation of that sentiment in the existence of fabulous wealth in the hands of a few and of extreme poverty experienced by the many. Socialism, both as an ideal and as a method, labours under the disadvantage of having no historical examples to point to in justification of its policy. It is a hypothetical cure by the application of experimental remedies. Moreover, while professing to rectify social wrongs and advance the amelioration of all classes of society, it rigorously excludes from its ranks everyone not in full sympathy with its methods. There is, we may hope, a true Socialism somewhere in the future which can be reached only by the growth of public opinion along the lines of ethical development, and by enlightened legislation founded thereon; and that brings us to the consideration of the Divine brotherhood, to which we shall now turn.

4. The *Divine brotherhood* is an order founded by Jesus Christ of which He continues to be the Head and the all-pervading Spirit. It knows no geographical bounds or national limitations. Its conditions of membership can be met by everyone desirous of entering into its fellowship, and the obligations undertaken by those who are within become increasingly easy by the mutual love that pervades its entire ranks.

This brotherhood has a mission in the world, and its methods are in harmony with its spirit, and effective in relation to the ends for which it exists. Its professed aim is the salvation of man from all personal ills and sins, and from all social wrongs and inequalities. Its ideal is the perfection of the race, and the realization of the Divine thought in His creation; and no higher purpose can be imagined than the restoration of man to the image of God, which sin had marred but could not wholly obliterate.

A desire and a willingness to be saved are the first conditions required of those who would join themselves to this Divine brotherhood. Within its ranks there is healing for the soul self-wounded by opposition to God's moral order. There is rest for the weary who have exhausted their strength in fruitless wanderings after the repose that can come only to those who are within the encircling arms of the Divine brotherhood. It stretches out a helping hand to those who have been compelled to abandon all effort to attain perfection of character by summoning to their aid exclusively their own powers and resources. Self-sacrifice is the Divine law of this order, and the perfection aimed at is that exemplified in the Supreme Head of the Order, who submitted to the will of God even unto death. The Divine Brotherhood has no outward visible manifestation equal to its extent. It is in harmony with all other movements for the amelioration of the race, for it includes them all and is opposed to none. Its progress is slow, because it depends exclusively on persuasion and enlightenment and is opposed to every form of compulsion or force. No member of the brotherhood finds himself within its ranks who has not previously surrendered himself by a willing and deliberate act, the outcome of his own free intelligence. Its progress depends on individual conquests and is achieved by intensive assimilation rather than by extensive actions.

This brotherhood has had an eventful history; but it has survived all efforts to crush it. It is coincident with the Kingdom of Heaven; but it can be reached through the visible Church only when the Church embodies its spirit and illustrates its laws. The will of the Master is its supreme law. In the first stages of its existence the Chief Shepherd was smitten and the sheep were scattered. But how soon did they rally under the new brotherhood, in which they had all things common; and the

day of Pentecost was the consecration of the brotherhood for its world-wide mission. Pagan Rome sought to crush and scatter the brotherhood, but in little more than three centuries it had to quench its persecuting fires and acknowledge the existence of a power it was impotent to destroy. The Reformation was largely an effort to bring the Church that had in many ways departed from brotherhood into harmony with forgotten principles. It was in danger of quenching the spirit it was its mission to maintain. The most striking characteristic of our own age is an effort everywhere to realize the Divine brotherhood.

¶ Plato's republic was a splendid philosophic dream, but its realization, were it possible, would exclude by far the larger portion of the human race. The same thing may be said of those who followed the Athenian in airy speculations on the notion of a perfect State. But Plato and his followers must yield pre-eminence to the Prophet of Nazareth, whose Kingdom offers salvation to everyone and social development in harmony with natural law. It gives stability to government founded on justice; and when His Kingdom comes in its fullness the Divine brotherhood will be coincident with the brotherhood of the race.[1]

The Obligations of Brotherhood.

1 Pet. ii. 17.—'Love the brotherhood.'

The word 'brother' and its compounds, such as 'brotherhood,' 'brotherly kindness,' 'brotherly love,' are almost a coinage of Christianity. The thing they connote is altogether so. Throw yourself back in imagination to the state of society in the old world when the gospel appeared. Try to realize the profound gulfs 'deep almost as life' which divided men from each other. There were hostilities of race and of religion. There were diversities of condition and even the separation of sex, which should have been the foundation of deepest unity. The Jew and the Gentile, the bond and the free, had no communion. Men and women had no real communion. How vastly the position of women has improved is recognized by every thoughtful student of history. But over the world thus divided into opposing sections there came the breath of a strange new uniting power. The gospel bridged over all the divisions and filled up all the gaps, and brought Jew and Gentile, bond and free, man and woman, into a great unity, so deep, so sweet, so real, that all antagonisms faded and vanished. The realization of a common relation to a Divine Father made all men who partook of it one. So it came to pass that new terms sprang into existence to express the new relationship which had triumphed over the tragic separations and distinctions of a chaotic world. Christianity created a new vocabulary as well as a new atmosphere.

Now each privilege is wedded to its corresponding responsibility.

1. Brotherhood is an obligation which arises from relationship. That is so with every family term. It is not one we may use at option and drop at fancy. In the majority of cases the words 'brother' and 'brethren' are irony and condemnation rather than reality. Sometimes they are mere sentimental expressions, intended to convey some rather indefinite idea that men ought to be tolerant of one another, and so forth. But brotherhood sinks its shafts deeper than that. It refers to a common fatherhood and a common sonship. It suggests a profounder reason why men should cherish kindly sentiments, relations, or emotions to each other, and that is, because they are the partakers of a common life derived from a common source. It 'reveals to us the great depth of our being in which we are all equal.' As Bishop Westcott points out, it is a Divine quality, widely different from that external quality which men have looked for in some reconstruction of the world. It is inherent and permanent. The ties of blood may be dissembled, disregarded, disgraced, but they cannot be destroyed. How true that is in our relationships! You may try to cast off your mother's other son because of his profligacy or profanity, but remember

> No distance breaks the ties of blood:
> Brothers are brothers evermore

[1] A. Gosman.

no matter what their faults, no matter what their relation to each other, no matter how they requite each other's affection and desire for sympathy. These are accidents which, in a sense, have nothing to do with the duty springing from relationship. The bond is knit in the essential order of things and cannot be broken.

The bond of brotherhood is doubly woven when a man becomes a Christian. Then he is no longer a brother after the flesh through creation, but a son of God through the Spirit. When we are thus born again, not of corruptible but of uncorruptible seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, then as partakers of this life derived from one Father, in the simplest and most prosaic sense of the word, we 'are brethren one of another.'

¶ The Bible has written a glorious headline above the page of human life in the title 'sons of God.' Some are in such a hurry that, like the copyist who glances only at the preceding line and repeats its mistakes, they take their ideals from the current opinions of those around them, and thus the soul becomes cramped, and presents an almost illegible imitation of the perfect Pattern. True, we meet with the conception of brotherhood in relationships outside that of religion; but, after all, how narrowed, how restricted, these are when compared with Christ's. *Esprit de corps* has often proved itself one of the strongest and noblest passions in men, and why? Simply because it is this force of Christian brotherhood in embryo. The youth who strains every nerve for the honour of his football team has in him the germ of a great passion that finds its complete satisfaction only in the service of Jesus. We can watch the concentric circles of that great idea as they widen out. We see it at its start in the home. Speak disrespectfully of a boy's father or his mother, or his sister, and if he is a true Briton you will not attempt to do it a second time! He will sacrifice everything, and blindly attack one twice his size, for the honour of his family. When older, he is as zealous for the interests of his native town, then for the political party to which he belongs. How he will work himself almost to death to get his candidate in; and when you analyse his motives you will find that party spirit is the dominant one. Or the circle widens farther, and even political differences are forgotten: the war drum summons the nation's youth to defend the flag. Patriotism links him now with the dark-skinned Indian, or bronzed bushman, as shoulder to shoulder on some bloody field loyalty to king and empire makes them forgetful of self. It is Christ who now draws the outer circumference of this great circle with His far-reaching truth of the sonship of God. Here it is impossible for us to measure the distance to which He stretches this grand idea; we only know that it makes us one not merely with our fellowmen but with the unseen communion of saints. How vast the breadth of such a brotherhood![1]

2. Brotherhood carries with it an obligation of love. Even in the Old Testament, in the Book of Leviticus, it is written, 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart,' while in the Christian dispensation love of the brethren is a vital test of spiritual condition: 'He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.' The standard of love for our neighbour is given in the old commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' The Christian teaching goes further, and gives a new ideal of regard. 'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another *as I have loved you.*' That is the supreme example. It transcends all others. It means loving the unworthy, the unlovely, the ungrateful, the rebellious; loving them to the point of sacrifice and self-surrender. On the principle that love and not self-interest should dominate our private and public relationship to our fellows, how far short we have come! What grievous breaches of the bond of mutual affection have there been!

¶ One night Sister Dora was sent for by a poor man who was dying of what she called 'black-pox,' a violent form of small-pox. She went at once and found him almost in the last extremity. All his relations had fled, and a neighbour alone was with him, doing what she could for him. When Sister Dora found that

[1] A. G. Mackinnon, *Tangible Tests*, 150.

only one small piece of candle was left in the house, she gave the woman some money, begging her to go and buy some means of light, while she stayed with the man. She sat on by his bed, but the woman, who had probably spent the money at the public-house, never returned; and after some little while the dying man raised himself up in bed with a last effort, saying, 'Sister, kiss me before I die.' She took him, all covered as he was with the loathsome disease, into her arms, and kissed him, the candle going out almost as she did so, leaving them in total darkness. He implored her not to leave him while he lived, although he might have known she would never do that. It was then past midnight, and she sat on, for how long she knew not, until he died.[1]

3. A further obligation of brotherhood is contained in Christ's words to St. Peter, 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren!' Give your brothers a chance to become strong. Let your own character be a shield for your fellows from things that would warp or blight their growing manhood. In one of the most felicitous expositions of the Holy Scripture, Sir G. A. Smith tells us the meaning of that passage in Isaiah, 'A man shall be as an hiding place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' It is that as a boulder in the wilderness stays the sand-drift from choking the young vegetation, so character is to be a defence against the time or place currents that may blight the springing life of goodness in our fellows.

We strengthen our brethren when we give them a safe example. 'Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.' There are many things that are lawful to us that are not expedient. There are practices that may be morally blameless, so far as we are concerned, that may be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to our brother. The possibilities of affecting our brother injuriously demand that we should consider his conscience as well as our own. We are so differently constituted that where one might be able to stand without risk another may be placed in the most imminent peril. This thought should govern our conduct and habits in relation to that large sphere of human activity where there is no special pronouncement as to the moral quality of an action. 'In things doubtful, love'—'If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth.'

¶ Many things in Dr. Whyte's ministry may have brought home to him the need for a firm stand on this [the Temperance] question, and doubtless his mother's strong conviction played its part; but the decisive factor in his case, as in that of Dr. Rainy shortly before, was what he had seen within the circle of his own friends. The first temperance meeting which he addressed was in the church of his brother-in-law at Cults. At this meeting he told most impressively how he had been brought sternly up against the havoc wrought by intemperance in the lives of more than one of the ablest and most promising among his own friends. For their sakes he had felt constrained himself to give up the use of alcohol; and he pled with the most solemn emphasis that his hearers should join in the same renunciation. For him it was a definite act of self-discipline, since no man of forty-five years of age can change the habit of half a lifetime, however strictly controlled it has been, without a vigorous and continued effort of will.[1]

4. A further obligation is that of ministry to my brother's need. 'Whoso hath the good things of this world, and seeth his brother have need, and yet shutteth up his tender compassion from him, how abideth the love of God in him?' Need is different from want. A man may want many things that are not necessities. It is possible to injure by a well-intentioned gift. If you do not meet a need you may minister to ruin. And a man's need is not always of the same kind. A monetary endowment is not always the most suitable bestowment. There are cases in which, like Peter and John, you can give an impotent man something better than silver and gold. Counsel, lessons in self-reliance, the overflowing of a tide of spiritual sympathy, may be more than any money's worth. One of the things for which some strong men crave is a

[1] Margaret Lonsdale, *Sister Dora*, 52.

[1] G. F. Barbour, *The Life of Alexander Whyte*, 234.

touch of tenderness, a warm hand-grip, a smile or word of encouragement. We may bestow to our brother's advantage the priceless treasure of spiritual endowment that will enrich his life much more than the good things of this world.

¶ If those who have this world's goods really entered into the spirit of Christ, that spirit would make them utterly dissatisfied until every gift of God they had in excess, whether for the development of body, soul, or spirit, was expended on those who have not, those who are allowed by God to have it not, that those who have it should supply what is lacking. If these words seem to you too severe, it is just because I know the good that lies hidden away in all these unrefined, non-religious souls. For the last twenty years I have been living amongst them. I know how easily all this wrong could be set right. No almsgiving, no patronage will ever do it. 'I give it to you because it is your right to get it. I give you temporal surroundings, in which your body may develop, intellectual surroundings, in which your mind may grow; above all, I give you love and sympathy, that your heart may grow too. I do it as an act of pure justice, because far too many of these things have been wasted on me. Alas! I have wasted them upon myself. I confess to you that I have seen my brother had need, that I have shut up the bowels of my compassion. I realise that there was no love of God in me.' Believe me, such a method will never fail. I know the hearts of these people—men lost to all sense of right, with nothing before them but sin, gaol, despair, women who have ceased to be women. There are thousands of them in England. Charity only makes them meaner and baser, and they will chuckle as they deceive you. They know as well as you do that this charity is in a large measure a kind of insurance against evil in this world, against evil in the world to come. But go to them having faith in them, as a man has in a man, and time will show you. If this be true of the utterly depraved, how much more true will it be of those who in the darkness are striving after light? Go to them in a spirit of justice and of love, and you will be to them, as Christ was to humanity, the revelation of a God they desired to see.'[1]

5. Forgiveness of injuries is a debt of brotherly love. It is also one of the most difficult to discharge. Malice entertained against your brother may make both him and you suffer. The Christian rule by which we are to seek to live is 'Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' Sometimes there are feelings of resentment over which it is most difficult to triumph. It seems as if an irreparable wrong had been done; but as God's grace has flowed out to us, so we must extend our pardon to our brother. If men have anything against us we are to seek reconciliation with them without waiting for the offended party to seek us out. 'If thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath somewhat against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift'. That is Christ's teaching.

¶ 'Do you think,' Florence Nightingale asked of a discontented nurse, 'I should have succeeded in doing anything if I had kicked and resisted and resented? Is it our Master's command? Is it even common sense? I have been even shut out of hospitals into which I had been ordered to go by the Commander-in-Chief—obliged to stand outside the door in the snow till night—been refused rations for as much as 10 days at a time for the nurses I had brought by superior command. And I have been as good friends the day after with the officials who did these things—have resolutely ignored these things *for the sake of the work*. What was I to my Master's work? When people offend, they offend the Master, before they do me. And who am I that I should not choose to bear what my Master chooses to bear?'[2]

[1] *The Life of Father Dolling*, 305.
[2] *The Life of Florence Nightingale*. ii. 195.

The Grace of Brotherhood.

1 Pet. ii. 17.—'Love the brotherhood.'

The Apostle means no doubt his brethren in Christ. Let us take his word in its modern use as expressing that which belongs to brethren in Christ. Let us consider the Meaning, the Need, the Secret and the Expression of Brotherhood.

1. First, then, *its Meaning*. The word 'brotherhood' carries us to a very narrow and a very sacred circle in the nature of the case—to the smallest and most sacred circle we can conceive of, where we have the common tie of blood, where we have a common relationship to a common Father, and where, therefore, there should be the expression of a common spirit, love manifesting itself in all the details and all the relationships of life. Love and brotherhood are interchangeable terms. Listen again, therefore, to the definition of brotherhood which the Apostle gives us. And change the word for the moment. 'Brotherhood suffereth long and is kind; brotherhood envieth not; brotherhood vaunteth not itself; brotherhood is not puffed up. Brotherhood doth not behave itself unseemly; brotherhood seeketh not its own; brotherhood is not easily provoked. Brotherhood thinketh no evil; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Brotherhood never faileth.' When we accept that conception of brotherhood and project it into the larger relationships of life, the relationship between family and family, between tribe and tribe, between nation and nation, we are made to realize that here we have the fundamental principle of life, which, if applied, will be the solvent of all our problems and all our difficulties.

2. Pass now to the second thought, *the Need*. Does not this old world of ours need this principle of brotherhood?—this war-scarred earth, with its wars and rumours of wars, with its hatreds, with its small nationalism, with its misunderstandings, with its unnatural social and class distinctions that have led to so much misunderstanding between class and class, with its industrial and economic problems. Does not this world need this principle of brotherhood?

And the Church? Does not the Church need this spirit of brotherhood—with her differences and divisions, her antagonisms and her jealousies, her misunderstandings, her economic waste, her failure to accomplish speedily the purpose for which she has been called into existence, her frequent misrepresentations of her Saviour and Lord? Does she not need the application of this principle? When we think of the Church to-day, we realize that here is the fundamental principle that she needs at this present moment. Is not this the thing that is really the initial step in the direction of that unity which our Master desires, and for which He prayed? Is not this the thing that will quicken the missionary vision of the Church, and intensify and unify her missionary activities? Is not this the supreme apologetic of the Christian Church?—'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. Is not this also the spirit in which the Church is to express herself and deliver the truth of the Master—'to speak the truth in love'? And is not this the final testimony of the world to the Church: 'See how these Christians love one another'?

¶ Christianity may yet evolve an infallible church, the church of the universal conscience, that we, abandoning self as selfishness, might find the truer, greater self in all humanity, in the self of others—the universal Self. In an age given up to the worship of Mammon, in the form of wealth and power, it will be well for all preachers to unite in making a demand for obedience to this the eleventh commandment, so expressly given by the founder of Christianity.[1]

3. The next point is *the Secret*. Does it lie in natural affection and natural relationship? Well, it ought to, and in the plan of God was intended to; but sin has laid its hand on even the most sacred relationships of life and

[1] *George Frederic Watts*, iii. 324.

spoiled them. Cain and Abel were brothers, but that did not prevent Cain from murdering his brother. Abraham and Lot were closely related, Abraham being more of a father to Lot than an uncle, yet Lot acted pretty meanly to his uncle. Jacob and Esau were brothers, but that did not prevent Jacob from behaving in a most despicable way towards his brother, or Esau from harbouring murderous thoughts towards Jacob. No; we need some new revelation of brotherhood. And it is given, is it not? in religion. But not all religions express themselves in brotherhood. It is the religion of Jesus Christ that contains the secret of brotherhood; yea, Christ Himself is the secret. There is a great deal of talk these days about the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; but in many cases the supreme factor is left out, and the theory becomes a delusion and a snare. That supreme factor is Jesus Christ our Saviour and Elder Brother. When I come to the point where, as a son of man, I recognize that I have broken with home and Father and wandered into a far country, and that the only way back again is through my Saviour and Elder Brother, it seems to me that then I get a real conception of what the Fatherhood of God means, and what the brotherhood of man means. Then, when I look round upon the sons of men, do they not become my brothers in a new and deeper sense? The secret of brotherhood is not in natural relationships; it is a supernatural grace. It is not simply natural affection, but a fruit of the Spirit which is Love.

¶ Twenty-eight years ago I was dumped down in an American Indian reservation and left to live there three years alone, to get my footing with the people. I am more thankful for that than any other experience I have had. I went prepared to love those Indians and to see the best in them and in their religion; but I have to confess that the religion they professed, whatever we may call it, did not express itself in Brotherhood. Passing through the forest one day, I came across a wigwam in which I found an old woman over a hundred years old, who had been turned out by her son to die. I took clothing and food to her and went to find the son to tell him what I thought about it, but he was away. Two or three days after that I was told the wigwam had been burned down, and the old woman burned down one side. I did what I could to dress her wounds, and she recovered. When I found the son I told him what I thought of him, and I am afraid I did not use very loving language either. But he took her back to his log cabin. I was away after that for three weeks. When I returned I asked for the old woman, and learned that she had been buried on the banks of the river. During my absence her son had put her out again, this time in an old log cabin, the chinks in which had not been filled up; and the change from the warm cabin to the other had been too much. That is only one illustration of the truth that there are religions which do not express themselves in brotherhood.[1]

4. Lastly, there comes the thought of *the Expression* of Brotherhood. This principle is for all life, in all its relationships. Our eyes again turn to Jesus of Nazareth, and we think of Him as our Elder Brother, and our Saviour. Yes, our Brother man, catholic, eternal, the international man, who understands us, who is one with us in our nature, in our experience, in our temptations; and yet the One who is superior to all environments, and who comes into close relationship with us, as close and intimate as He once had with His disciples two thousand years ago. And we hear Him say, 'I am among you as one that serveth.' And then we remember the other side of His nature, and hear that marvellous statement: 'I am the way and the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.' And we are made to recognize that He is not only human, but Divine, that the Divine Christ says, 'I am among you as one that serveth.' There comes to us the new meaning of service; there is a new understanding of service. It becomes a Divine thing, a Christlike thing, spiritual in its motive, sacrificial in its expression, and saving in its results.

¶ Said one to another, as he considered the

[1] W. J. Southam, in *World-Brotherhood* (ed. Basil Mathews), 67.

depressing condition of things around him, 'God mend all.' To which his comrade made reply, 'Nay, but we must help God to mend things.' It is because Help sees that God makes earth purer for men by the efforts of their fellows that he takes a public part in 'the reconstruction of human society upon a Christian basis.' It makes him unpopular with the Laodiceans, but the conviction that is in the path of progress makes him say, 'I can do no other, so help me God.' He has a compasion for wronged and outraged humanity. Occasionally the service of his fellows takes him into company that will make the Pharisee pull a wry face and suggest that poor Help has lost his reputation and is no fellow for decent society. He has been known before this to walk through a public street arm-in-arm with a drunkard. He serves on public boards, although it means obloquy and reproach. He might spend the time to personal advantage or in personal pleasure. The position invites scurrilous slander and base attack, but he has an eye to the cleansing of the city, and because of the glory that will descend through his instrumentality out of heaven, bringing a new earth, he counts all reproach as nothing. He is one of the righteous men for whose sake the sinning community is spared.[1]

[1] J. E. Wakerley, *The Making of Moral Manhood*, 205.

THE FEAR OF GOD.

1 Pet. ii. 17.—'Fear God.'

Not long ago a great churchman said regretfully that no one feared God nowadays. But whether one agrees with him depends to a large extent on what one means by fearing God and not fearing Him. 'To fear God' may mean the terror of a grovelling superstition, and that is not a loss we need regret. But it is an essential part of the Christian life 'to fear God without being afraid of Him.'

I.

THE BASE FEAR OF GOD.

There is a pungent description of this in Calvin's Institutes:

'There are those who instead of the voluntary fear flowing from reverence of the Divine majesty, feel only that forced and servile fear which Divine judgment extorts—judgment which, from the impossibility of escape, they are compelled to dread, but which, while they dread, they at the same time also hate. The wicked do not fear God from any unwillingness to offend him, provided they could do so with impunity; but knowing that he is armed with power for vengeance, they tremble in dismay on hearing of his anger.'[1]

[1] *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, i. 63, ii. 127.

This is the fear of God as a Jailer and Executioner, who stands and waits until that sure detective, Death, shall hunt the criminal down and bring him into court, where, by the way, there is no jury—a thing that certainly would not have been omitted if Western nations had written the Bible—and where, really without trial—for his condemnation is a foregone conclusion—he is turned into the despair and torment of the lost. This is the low, coarse, hell-fire fear—the fear described in this death-bed scene:

In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement;
Runs to each avenue, and shrieks for help,
But shrieks in vain! How wishfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer hers!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
Oh might she stay to wash away her stains,
And fit her for her passage!
Her very eyes weep blood, and every groan
She heaves is big with horror; but the foe,
Like a stanch murderer steady to his purpose,
Pursues her close through every lane of life,
Nor misses once the track, but presses on;
Till, forced at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin.

1. *The cause of the base fear is a base conception of God.*

Voltaire's famous statement, that God made man in His own image and man has ever since been returning the compliment, has a good deal of truth in it. When men took their eyes off the one perfect revelation of God in Christ, and began to think *about* God instead of *of* Him, they were liable to see a god in their own image and sometimes worse. Believing, apparently, that a man's vindictiveness was in proportion to the measure of his power, they believed that an Omnipotent Being would 'take it out of' anyone He disapproved of in precise proportion to His omnipotence, and without any coup-de-grace. They affirmed, with all the weight of ecclesiastical authority, that anyone who did not believe in this would be a special object of omnipotent malice; and after the Reformation they made it worse by adding the dark doctrines of arbitary election to pre-ordained salvation or damnation, both eternal and unmodifiable.

¶ To the savage God is a Being who must be propitiated and appeased. His power is exercised in a purely arbitary manner—

As it likes me each time, I do: *so He.*

It may be His fancy to kill or keep alive, to destroy or to preserve. His anger is manifested in the violence of Nature, in outbursts of wind or thunder or storm. He is the tyrant of the skies; and, like all tyrants, He can be cajoled by the bribery or flattery or obsequiousness of His subjects. In this stage of religious development there is to be found little else save the element of fear.[1]

2. *The effect of such base fear has been disastrous.* There were three possible consequences.

(1) The self-righteous, feeling acceptable to themselves, believed that they must be equally acceptable to the God they saw in their image. Consequently they had no compunction in damning, to the best of their ability, all who differed from them. They did their best to give them hell in this world as well as in the next. This, of course, had for its obvious consequence religious intolerance and the persecution that has stained the history of every sect that has ever had the power to persecute, with the honourable exception of the Society of Friends. But, apart from this, there was the consequence in misery nearer home. In the gloomier sects of the last generation—indeed, of some contemporary ones—it seemed to be the preacher's aim that everybody must be made to realize that he was in a horrible dungeon of sin and wretchedness, an excruciating prison, with the doom of Divine wrath hanging over him. In this effort, the strange thing was that the indictment was general, that it applied to all alike. The congregation, in the preacher's mind, was divided into only two classes, namely, those who had accepted the plan of salvation, and those who had not. All those who had not, notwithstanding any difference among them, must be alike convicted of sin. One might have lived a desperately wicked life, and have been a disgrace to his neighbourhood; another might be a pure-living man, known to everyone for kindness and honesty of word and deed, but both alike must be convicted of sin, both alike must be stricken down with anguish, both alike must feel that they were in doomed Sodom, and escape lest they be consumed. It was sought to produce this convulsive sense of sin, not by an appeal to the experience of the individual, not by an indictment based on facts in his own life, not by an effort to show the wickedness of anything which he himself had done, but by a general theory that all men are sinners, and by the most terrifying descriptions that could be imagined of the wrath of God. They were not experiencing a true sense of personal sin, but rather a feeling of terror and fright. They had believed that they were the sinners described, not in the sense of having themselves indulged feelings, and done deeds to merit the description, but in the sense that they belonged to a sinful race which was doomed.

¶ Jonathan Edwards complains of the weakness of those who shrink from throwing children into ecstasies of fear with talk of hell fire and eternal damnation. 'But if those who complain so loudly of this,' he remarks,

[1] F. A. Iremonger, *Before the Morning Watch*, 67.

'really believe, what is the general profession of the country, viz., that all are by nature the children of wrath and heirs of hell; and that every one that has not been born again, whether he be young or old, is exposed, every moment, to eternal destruction, under the wrath of Almighty God; I say, if they really believe this, then such a complaint and cry as this betrays a great deal of weakness and inconsideration. As innocent as children seem to be to us, yet, if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight, but are young vipers and are infinitely more hateful than vipers and are in a most miserable condition, as well as grown persons.'

(2) If the strong and narrow were driven by fear into the essentially unchristian attitude to God that we have just described the weaker crouched abject and suffered torments. Mr. Williams says[1]:—

'The preaching produced a very real sense of an unreal danger; terrible things which did not exist crowded and tormented the imagination. If the plan of salvation was accepted, then came a feeling of security which again corresponded to no fact; a feeling of rescue and escape often when there had been neither. Very often nothing had really happened, except that there had come an imaginary deliverance from an imaginary danger. I can remember when a boy listening to the great Welsh preachers delivering such sermons as I have described. I was made to feel that I was on the brink of perdition; that, so far as God was concerned, He had no option but to hurl me over, He must maintain His justice and the dignity of His law. I can remember the terror of it now. When the preacher came to describe my one chance of salvation which was through Christ, I was quite ready to take it, and persuaded myself that I had taken it. Then came a feeling of calm and security. All these feelings were very real, but the danger I feared was unreal, and the safety I thought I had won was also unreal. They were both manufactured by doctrines strongly urged upon a sensitive mind, and coloured in a vivid imagination. Nor was either feeling truly ethical, mark you. What made me think that sin was a terrible thing was that it involved me in such consequences; and the glory of salvation was that it delivered me from all danger. Neither the fear nor the joy was truly ethical—it was all a concern for myself. And I do not believe now that any man can be saved if his main concern is for himself, even though that concern be for his soul.' God, who made man to love Him and work with Him, must have sorrowed as a father sorrows who, loving his children, sees them cringe before him and stand ready to wince from an expected blow, coming to Him not because they loved Him and knew His love, but because He would torture them if they did not obey.

¶ These persons do not believe noble things concerning God; they do not think that He is as ready to pardon them as they are to pardon a sinning servant; they do not believe how much God delights in mercy, nor how wise He is to consider and to make abatement for our unavoidable infirmities: they make judgment of themselves by the measures of an angel, and take the account of God by the proportions of a tyrant. The best that can be said concerning such persons is, that they are hugely tempted or hugely ignorant. For though 'ignorance' is by some persons named the 'mother of devotion,' yet, if it falls in a hard ground, it is the 'mother of atheism'; if in a soft ground, it is the 'parent of superstition'; but if it proceeds from evil or mean opinions of God (as such scruples and unreasonable fears do many times), it is an evil of a great impiety, and in some sense, if it were in equal degrees, is as bad as atheism. . . .

But that the evil may be proportionable to the folly, and the punishment to the crime, there is no man more miserable in the world than the man who fears God as his enemy, and religion as a snare, and duty as intolerable, and the commandments as impossible, and his Judge as implacable, and His anger as certain, insufferable, and unavoidable. Whither shall this man go? where shall he lay his burden? where shall he take sanctuary? for he fears the altars as the places where his soul bleeds and dies; and God, who is his Saviour, he looks upon as his enemy; and because He is Lord of

[1] *The Evangel of the New Theology*, 72.

all, the miserable man cannot change his service, unless it be apparently for a worse. And therefore, of all the evils of the mind, fear is certainly the worst and the most intolerable.[1]

(3) Brave and generous souls often turned from God outright. They had never seen the God who was revealed to men in the noblest, bravest, and most gentle of leaders, the pattern of all gallant chivalry, the Man Christ Jesus. All that had been put before them was a brutal bully, who promised that the joy of those he favoured should include the delight derived from the contemplation of the eternal torture of little children. So the men who could best serve God never saw Him, never reached out their hands to Him, but stood as bravely as they might to defy what they thought He was.

The result in the long run was that such teaching defeated its own ends and caused a defection from religion. Those who had been brave enough to point out the hideousness of such a God had struck the spark of revolt in generous hearts. And when modern science crumbled the foundations of some of the old conceptions, this went too. God became a discarded idol, a superstition, a falsehood, a thing under whose influence men had too long groaned, a thing to be cast out.

II.

THE NOBLE FEAR OF GOD.

The right fear of the Lord is the beginning not only of wisdom but of all the virtues that are not merely negative, and some that are. To quote Calvin again, 'The fear of the Lord, therefore, may be defined as reverence mingled with honour and fear. It is not strange that the same mind can entertain both feelings; for he who considers with himself what kind of a father God is to us, will see sufficient reason, even were there no hell, why the thought of offending him should seem more dreadful than any death. But so prone is our carnal nature to indulgence in sin, that, in order to curb it in every way, we must also give place to the thought that all iniquity is abomination to the Master under whom we live; that those who, by wicked lives, provoke his anger, will not escape his vengeance.'[1]

> What is thy fear, oh soul? the fear of that dark place,
> Or fear to lose the light of thy Creator's face?[2]

¶ You know what happens to a child if there is not enough bone-making material in the food on which it is brought up. It grows up weak and rickety. A true fear, the fear taught by the Bible, is like bone-making material to religion.[3]

1. *The basis of this noble fear is a true conception of God.*

(1) The primary element is the realization of God's relation to evil, which is one of utter and fundamental antithesis and antagonism, coupled with the knowledge of how much evil there is within ourselves, however we may struggle against it. This seems at first sight a mere restatement of the old position, but it is not. The old view was that we *were* evil and that God would therefore damn us. The new is very different. There is evil *in us* God is fundamentally antagonistic to it, as to all evil, and will destroy it in the long run. But whether we shall be destroyed with it depends on whether we have rigidly held ourselves apart from it, as far as we were able, or whether we have allowed it power over us, to taint and interfuse the good, so that it chokes the latter or cannot be separated from it. But the evil in us, brought face to face with God's absolute goodness, fears it with the foreknowledge of its own defeat: and the good, conscious by contrast of its own imperfections, is stricken with awe, which is sublimated fear, and is abased in the presence of infinite purity and wisdom.

¶ I felt she was right in the Presence of God, and I was *terrified* lest I should feel that Presence too. That God's perfection should come near my wickedness, I felt would simply scorch me up. . . . The feeling of awe, almost

[1] Bishop Jeremy Taylor, *Godly Fear*, 34, 36.

[1] *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ii. 127.
[2] R. C. Trench.
[3] E. Talbot.

of terror, inspired by the contrast between our sin and His perfection, is, I think, as inevitable as it is good.[1]

(2) And arising from this comes the fear of the terrible mercy of God—the consciousness of a power and goodness so unchallengeable that it cannot merely pardon distantly, but stands down among us and, marvellously patient, gives us chance after chance in place of those we have flung away. To realize the infinite abysses of God's patience is more profoundly terrible than the thought of any fiery many-chambered Hell. One can imagine men big enough 'to hold Hell in great scorn' and for very despair find strength to be unbroken: but there is no man that may stand upright before God's mercy.

I would have stood against the wrath of God
And faced his thunderbolts, nor been afraid.
When the Last Trumpet sounded, and the roll
Of mighty angel-voices through the sky
Cried like a flame for me, with the pains of hell,
All that the priests have prated, in mine eyes,
I would have stood and level faced his wrath
Who daunts the very stars and all their hosts
With fiery splendour of the morning-gold.
Omnipotent was he, to smite or save:
The very odds were but too great to fear.
If he, All-powerful, struck me with his might,
He was All-powerful. Therefore I should win
Who cried no mercy as he struck me down.

Surely the angels laughed, that better knew
God's ways than I. I stood before the throne,
Naked and mailed in pride, flung down the sword
I knew was broken—I would conquer so.
Whereat a voice came great and patiently
From the blue splendour of the starry throne,
'Thou who hast flouted God, now go, be free.'
And there was silence in the whole of space.
I stood the while the planets went their way.
And none regarded, made to punish me.
So that I fell, face in my hands, ashamed,
I who had dared so. Vainly had I dared
Unarmed the very thunder of God's wrath,
I, bold to brave it. Now I, having known,
The terror of his mercy, was afraid.[1]

[1] A. Tillyard, *The Making of a Mystic*, 48, 50.

¶ Clement of Alexandria has handled fear in a truly Christian spirit. It is not the fear of the slave who hates his master, it is the reverence of a child for its father, of a citizen for the good magistrate. Tertullian, an African and a lawyer, dwells with fierce satisfaction on terrible visions of torment. The cultivated Greek shrinks not only from the gross materialism of such a picture, but from the idea of retribution which it implies. He is never tired of repeating that Justice is but another name for Mercy. Chastisement is not to be dreaded, but to be embraced. 'The mirror is not evil to the ugly face because it shows it as it is, the physician is not evil to the sick man because he tells him of his fever. For the physician is not the cause of the fever.' Still more evidently true is this of Jesus. 'The Lord who died for us is not our enemy.' Here or hereafter God's desire is not vengeance but correction.[2]

2. *The noble fear of God 'enlarges the heart.'*

To have any active idea of God—not a mere intellectual conception—is to realize intensely this fundamental antagonism to sin itself, and, co-existing, the infinite mercy and patience towards sinners that are the two most 'terrible things in righteousness.' So that fear is a necessary element in any real idea of God. But to 'understand the fear of the Lord' in this way, to realize what the Psalmist meant by saying, 'there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared,' is, in Isaiah's splendid phrase, 'to fear, and be enlarged.' The poet who wrote the 130th Psalm looked round in his misery, in his despair, on our world, and suddenly he saw a great fact. He saw that the awful, almighty God does not put an end to sin; that though this world has gone astray—though all mankind is tainted with pollution and corruption—still the world goes on; men are not destroyed, ruined, put out of existence. God is very patient with them; justice is not executed. If God were to do that there

[1] Agnes Muriel Mackenzie.

[2] C. Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, 89.

would not be a man left living. What is the meaning of that? It means that God is not tired of men. He has not repented of the world He has made; He does not despair of men yet. If God is continuing the race of mankind, it must be because He means to help them out of their lostness, out of their sin. There must be in God forgiveness. 'But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.' What is the meaning of that? Fear is a word which, like love, covers a great many different meanings, and is used to describe things the most diverse. There is cringing, coward fear—dread; *that* cannot be meant. There is terror that puts man at a distance; *that* cannot be meant. But there is fear, the feeling of revering awe, of worshipful adoration; a conscious sense of knowing Someone infinitely grander, nobler, more pitiful and awful in justice, mercy, purity, might, in heaven high above us, yet craving for us, and the sense of belonging to that Being. That is the fear of God. That perception gives the climax of reverence and the fullness of power. Henceforth nothing can be common or unclean except the pollution of sin. The whole of life becomes the temple of God, and is filled with His glory. Life assumes abiding dignity and grandeur, and becomes worth living. At nightfall Jacob's pillow was a stone, and his bed-chamber a rocky glen. At midnight he received the fear of the name of the manifested God. And in the morning his stony pillow had become an altar, and the rocky glen the house of God and the gate of heaven.

It is not the fear of being harmed or tormented by the power of God, but the fear of violating His infinite and awful sanctity. It is not the fear of the coward or the poltroon, but the fear of the seraphim who veil their faces and tremble with reverence before the glory of God. It is not the fear that brings torment, but the fear that induces worship and adoration. It is not the fear that drives a man to shrink in terror before the wrath of God, but the fear that teaches him to pray with solemn yearning, 'Hallowed be thy name!'

Here then is the touchstone of a genuine or a spurious fear of God. The one disposes us to do His will from a sincere complacency and acquiescence in it. The other prompts us rather to resist it, except in so far as our compliance may seem necessary to escape His wrath, which is the only real object of this slavish dread. The one is a fear of punishment as the consequence of sin; the other is a fear of sin itself, as intrinsically evil, or, what amounts to the same thing, as opposed to the will of God and to His very nature, which is thus assumed as the ultimate criterion of right and wrong, of good and evil. Only a filial fear disposes men to *serve* God.

¶ Fear is the great bridle of intemperance, the modesty of the spirit, and the restraint of gaieties and dissolutions; it is the girdle to the soul, and the handmaid to repentance; the arrest of sin, and the cure or antidote to the spirit of reprobation; it preserves our apprehensions of the Divine Majesty, and hinders our single actions from combining to sinful habits; it is the mother of consideration, and the nurse of sober counsels; and it puts the soul to fermentation and activity, making it to pass from trembling to caution, from caution to carefulness, from carefulness to watchfulness, from thence to prudence; and, by the gates and progresses of repentance, it leads the soul on to love, and to joys in God that shall never cease again.[1]

3. *The fear of God, even when noble, is not an end in itself* but a means to a higher end. It is not a good in itself, for 'fear hath torment,' but it is a necessary stepping-stone to that which is really good. It is not the permanent and ultimate thing that God desires in us, but only a preliminary to the state of mind and heart which will fully meet His will. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but the end of wisdom is the perfect love that casteth out fear.

The painfulness of our fear comes only in so far as we are evil. The good in us fears God, but has nothing to fear *from* Him. So that ultimately, if we turn to God with all our strength and let the fear of Him cast out and overcome all other fears, He will enter into us and strengthen all that is good, until, the evil

[1] Bishop Jeremy Taylor, *Godly Fear*, 31.

cast out, He lifts us too close to Him for fear to be possible. It seems beyond even the most ultimate range of far possibility; but we have the assurance: 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' 'O man greatly beloved, fear not.'

Wilt Thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin? and made my sin their door?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallowed in, a score?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by Thy self, that at my death Thy son
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore;
And, having done that, Thou hast done,
I fear no more.[1]

The King's Honour.

1 Pet. ii. 17.—'Honour the king.'

1. It is the duty of all Christian citizens to consider how they can best honour and support those who rule over them in the fear of God. In the olden time a 'canning,' 'könig,' or 'king,' among the Saxons, was the strongest or ablest man. The word literally signifies the one who *can*, or who has power, to govern. In many instances the crown was seized by physical force, or warlike stratagem.

The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep that can.

[1] John Donne.

The man who could take and keep what he had grasped was acknowledged the sovereign of the realm. He asked no other recognition than obedience or submission to his arbitrary will and law. Thank God that in His providence He has delivered us from this abnormal state of things. Our land is now blessed with the best of earthly sovereigns. To honour the king, therefore, is not only the first, but the pleasantest, of all political duties. However parties may differ, in this they are at one.

2. The fear of the Lord furnishes the highest incentive to honouring the king. 'The fear of the Lord,' as Solomon tells us, 'is the beginning of wisdom.' And it is certainly the beginning of all political wisdom. If rulers legislate on the principles of the Bible, they will have, of course, the support of all who believe in the Bible, and the blessing of all that is promised in the Bible. If, on the other hand, their statutes and enactments and public policy are contrary to the language and spirit of the Bible, they cannot expect that support, for 'we must obey God rather than men.' In the same way those who have been indoctrinated into the truth of the Bible, and taught to yield obedience to its precepts, are the most loyal and devoted subjects of the king. They not only obey him and honour him for his own sake, and consult their own interests in serving him, but they honour and obey him for his Master's sake, because he is the agent and representative of the great 'King of kings.' Hence Christian subjects are the most loyal of all citizens. They fear God, and, therefore, they honour the king.

¶ Much sorry stuff, written some hundred years ago or more, about the 'Divine right of Kings,' moulders unread now in the Public Libraries of this country. Far be it from us to disturb the calm process by which it is disappearing harmlessly from the earth, in those repositories! At the same time, not to let the immense rubbish go without leaving us, as it ought, some soul of it behind—I will say that it did mean something; something true, which it is important for us and all men to keep in mind. To assert that in whatever man you chose to lay hold of (by this or the other plan

of clutching at him); and clapt a round piece of metal on the head of, and called King, there straightway came to reside a divine virtue, so that *he* became a kind of god, and a Divinity inspired him with faculty and right to rule over you to all lengths: this,—what can we do with this but leave it to rot silently in the Public Libraries? But I will say withal, and that is what these Divine Right men meant, That in Kings, and in all human Authorities, and relations that men god-created can form among each other, there is verily either a Divine Right or else a Diabolic Wrong; one or the other of these two! For it is false altogether, what the last Sceptical Century taught us, that this world is a steam-engine. There is a God in this world; and a God's sanction, or else the violation of such, does look-out from all ruling and obedience, from all moral acts of men. There is no act more moral between men than that of rule and obedience. Woe to him that claims obedience when it is not due; woe to him that refuses it when it is![1]

3. But, after all, 'Honour the king' is no mere personal command. These words were written when Nero was Emperor of Rome—a man whom no one could personally honour at all; and therefore the very fact that they were used when the world had such a king shows that they teach some principle of the government of the world which is independent of the personal attributes of any particular Sovereign. And what they convey is this: that the God of order, the God whose creation in Nature works like a machine, desires to see settled authority and settled government for the rule of His people. Therefore, when we have in the country or in a borough a settled authority, a settled government, our duty as citizens is part of our duty to God.

¶ Loyalty to a person is easy. Loyalty to a principle is harder. That country is happy in which the person and the principle are so closely and so dearly knit together that the loyalty of conscience becomes also a loyalty of affection, and has passed long since from a duty into an instinct and a passion. But the word of the Apostle knows nothing of political constitutions or of earthly frontiers. Its sound is gone out into all lands. In America, in Switzerland, in France . . . the same spiritual voice is still heard, 'Honour the king.' And to all alike it says, whether the subjects of a monarchy or the citizen of a republic, 'Reverence authority. Hold rulers in respect for their work's sake. Love your country not as citizens only, or as gentlemen only, but as Christians.'[1]

[1] Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, 183.

Suffering.

1 Pet. ii. 19.—'Suffering wrongfully.'

THERE has never been an age in which the conscience has been so keenly aroused as it is in our age to the hideous universality of suffering and to the perception of wrong as the cause of suffering. If we could catechize every man who is in grief, we should find that in most cases he would indicate some wrong—done perhaps by himself, but probably by others—as the origin of it. It is the testimony of all men that these two things are inseparable; that they are related as cause and effect; that wherever one is, there the other must be. The inventors of social utopias represent suffering, or the defect of sufficient comfort, as the source of evil: the prophets and apostles of God declare that sin, or the want of conscience towards God, is the source of suffering. Even Christ, 'who did no sin,' says St. Peter, in this Epistle, 'his own self bare our sins.' The utopist predicts that universal comfortableness would produce universal justice and goodness, or at least he hopes that it would produce a goodness almost universal; the Apostle proclaims that universal righteousness —'the kingdom of God and its righteousness' —is the first thing which a man has to seek, whether its next results be comfort or suffering.

1. Now, in the first place, suffering is not a condition of life imposed upon man of necessity by the will of God. We are told sometimes that God has created suffering and pain,

[1] H. Montague Butler, *Public School Sermons*, 194.

that God has created sorrow, that God has created sickness and death. It is untrue. Nothing that contributes to human suffering is directly and immediately of the purpose of God for human life. God Himself lives in bliss. God is leading His elect home to live their lives through eternity under conditions that are true to human nature, and those conditions are the conditions of bliss. And He who thus deals in other spheres with His creatures never called us to live in the grip of pain, to go upon our way in the agony of mental perplexity, to go through life with broken hearts within us, to know the fierceness of moral conflict or the bitterness of spiritual desolation.

Physical pain comes from the violation of physical laws; mental perplexity comes from sinning against the law of faith; sorrow comes because we are called upon to live in a world in which the affections have become so much soiled and degraded by sinning. Every form of suffering that we know comes when we violate God's laws. And if this be true, is it not clear as can be—first, that suffering is not of God, but is in spite of God; that God has done all that He could to shield the beings to whom He gave the power of self-regulation?

2. But then, if suffering is not in the world of God's mission, it is plainly in the world of God's permission. Sin did not come upon God as a surprise. He foreknew from eternity, when He willed to create men, how they would exercise that awful prerogative of self-determination of conduct with which He dowered them; and foreseeing this, He foresaw the necessary consequences of this deviation of the human race from the ideal life marked out for it by the will of God. So we go to the Cross, and we see that it is the great act of human sin; but we see, in the next place, that this act of human sin is with the permission of God. He, that innocent and just One, who hangs upon the cross, came from the Father, in order that He might submit to those conditions of exterior and interior suffering which marked the whole of His life, and find the climax in His glorious Passion. And as it is with Him, so it is with those who share the nature which He has shared. As St. Peter says, in the words we are considering, our Lord's life is an *example*. It is a remarkable word in the original, it means just this—it is what an original picture is to the student who is copying it. So we can see in the life and death of Jesus Christ what are the conditions of our life, what are the conditions of our death. And they are the conditions of suffering.

God permits this suffering: why? Because He knows how to turn the curse into a blessing, and it is because of the way in which God uses suffering for the good of nations and for the good of individuals, if they will put themselves into right relation to Him, that we can see into the mystery of suffering. If it be true that the results of suffering are beneficial to His creatures who have fallen into the state of sin, then we can see that God's love, God's wisdom, and God's power are vindicated, although the suffering condition of human life is not that which is ideally His constitution for the life of man.

(1) Kneeling, then, at the foot of the Cross we can see how this fact of suffering, if it be rightly faced, and this condition of suffering, if we only live through it, may become to us an intense good. Suffering, in the first place, is corrective. We see it in a nation—we saw it in our own nation during these four terrible years of war. 'When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants learn righteousness.' We could not be flippant with the ordinary flippancy of human life under the conditions in which so many of our loved ones were then; we could not go on our way with unrestrained laughter, making all the world a stage, and behaving as if all the people in it were but actors; we could not do that when on every hand there was woe in the homes of our acquaintances, and grief and bitterest anxiety in our hearts. And as suffering corrects a nation, so also it corrects individuals. We do not say it has always corrected it. It depends how a nation and an individual take it. But the possibility of purification of character, the possibility of amendment of life, the deliverance from sin

which suffering makes possible to us are magnificent possibilities indeed.

¶ The revelation of Jesus Christ is that sorrow can disclose some blessing we never had before—complete some incompleteness—give a higher meaning to all our life. It can do this not only because we make the best of the worst, but because it comes as a messenger of God to do this very thing. That is what Frederick William Robertson meant when he said, 'A man's work is not done upon earth so long as God has anything for him to suffer.' If we think that sorrow has come to crush our spirit we naturally revolt against it. It makes us defiant. We will not be crushed! We have the spirit to defy the Universe to crush us!

It was in this spirit that William Ernest Henley was a leader of revolt. His life seemed a long night of suffering borne with heroic endurance, but the experience was embittered by the conviction that he was fighting against blind forces which threatened to crush an indomitable soul. All the power of his nature rose up in protest against a thinking creature being at the mercy of unthinking Fate. He retained the captaincy of his soul to the end.

> In the fell clutch of circumstance
> I have not winced or cried aloud.
> Under the bludgeonings of chance
> My head is bloody but unbow'd.

Sorrow which we accept from the hand of God affects us in a very different way. It may produce only the spirit of resignation. There is a pathetic way of uttering 'Thy will be done' which is not far removed from the fatalism which induces the Mohammedan murmur, 'Kismet.' It is one thing to be resigned, to feel that God's will is to be *endured*, and quite another thing to respond to the Divine ordering and wish God's will to be *done*. There are those who travel through the valley of Baca (the vale of sorrow) and only remember it as a barren, waterless region; there are others who follow in the same track, but hope in God transforms the desert into a place of springs which refresh the soul. If we can believe that God never sends sorrow to crush our spirit—only to make us better men—that there is some blessing in sorrow which could not come to us in any other way—we shall be just as brave as the man who would not 'wince or cry aloud,' but instead of stoical defiance, faith and hope will grow to appreciate the unspeakable comfort of God.[1]

(2) And then, again, suffering not only corrects, but it educates. It develops the character within. It draws out the mind to a fuller faith in God, it fixes the heart upon God, so that it is given up more wholly to His love. It leads the will into beautiful, increased, active, patient conformity with the will of God. It sheds a wonderful peace over the conscience. It develops a marvellous type of character, it even gives a beauty to the countenance which nothing but that can give. To any spirit thus developed under God's discipline of suffering, it shines out in the transfigured face.

> Shut out from life's fair joys,
> From spring's bright flowers,
> From summer's smiling scenes:
> With weakened powers
> I lie a prisoner in my little place,
> And sing God's grace.
>
> The busy world goes on,
> My hands are still;
> My feet no longer haste
> To do my will;
> But I have learned to yield, and idle lie
> While others ply.
>
> Shut in with God! ah! this
> The secret is,
> The spring of all my peace,
> My source of bliss;
> No sting hath suffering, and no place hath fear,
> For God is here!
>
> Shut out from life's sweet toil,
> Shut in with pain;
> Yet Thou hast changed each loss
> To brightest gain;
> And Thou hast taught me, though to learn so slow,
> This truth to know:

[1] M. Devine, *The Religion of the Beatitudes*, 55.

Whether by fervent toil,
Or lying still,
He only truly serves
Who does Thy will:
Then where and how Thou wilt, Thy servant use;
I would not choose.[1]

(3) Again, suffering develops in men the one thing that is most necessary for the fulfilment of their duty to their fellows. We are placed, as we are being told so continually in these days, we are placed in a condition of life in which none of us lives to himself. Each of us has duties to all. If we go to the foundation of what we have to exercise among our fellows, it is holy, helpful influence. It is the object of all our ministry, whether in corporate works of mercy or spiritual works of mercy, to exercise this power and influence. We are sent out into a suffering world for that purpose. So God leads us through suffering, and comforts us effectually in our suffering. Why? That we may ourselves be brothers and sisters of consolation, comforting others with the comfort wherewith we have been comforted of God. It is always the case. It is those who have had the widest and the deepest experience of life under sorrowful conditions who go amongst their fellow-men dowered with the heart that can understand, and with the hand that knows how to touch wisely and tenderly and effectually.

¶ Every life has an influence for good or evil. I have gone through a great deal of painful inward experience ever since I was quite little. I am sure that God has ordered my life for a very definite purpose, as my present condition shows; and He has done it with such tenderness and exquisite gentleness, bringing each trial gradually to me, that now I lie here in my helplessness a willing instrument in the hands of God. I take up the task He sets me, even though I would have preferred to remain unnoticed. I will be brave, and shoulder even that responsibility which seems almost too much for my spiritual and physical powers. And since it is my life-work to witness to the power of faith in suffering, I accept it very gratefully, and I thank God for it every day, asking Him to sustain me in this most beautiful path of service—that of glorifying Him by suffering, and so, by this means, of leading many souls to trust Him too.'[1]

(4) Nor is this all. There is a strange connection between life here, under its transitory conditions, and life there. And as we go upon our way, more and more corrected, more and more purified from sin, more and more educated, conformed unto the will of God, more and more Christlike in tenderness of heart and in power of sympathy, the vision of the future grows clearer and clearer within us. In suffering we learn the right proportion of things; in suffering, as in no other condition of life, we learn to consider the relation that exists between that which is transitory and that which is eternal. We know that our sufferings are but for a moment, and that they work out for us an eternal weight of glory; that if we suffer with Christ we shall also reign with Him. And thus, as we realize that in a suffering life we are in union with Him who suffered on the cross, hope as to the future grows stronger and stronger within us, and where hope is joy abounds, until even here upon earth sorrow is found to be the condition of gladness, and suffering co-exists with peace.

Here, and here alone,
Is given thee to *suffer* for God's sake.
In other worlds we shall more perfectly
Serve Him and love Him, praise Him, work for Him,
Grow near and nearer Him with all delight;
But then we shall not any more be called
To suffer, which is our appointment here.
Canst thou not suffer then one hour,—or two?
If He should call thee from thy cross to-day,
Saying, It is finished!—that hard cross of thine
From which thou prayest for deliverance,
Thinkest thou not some passion of regret
Would overcome thee? Thou wouldst say, 'So soon?
Let me go back, and suffer yet awhile
More patiently;—I have not yet praised God.'[2]

[1] S. M. G.

[1] P. Seippel, *A Living Witness*, 174.
[2] Mrs. Hamilton King.

The Christian Ideal.

1 Pet. ii. 21.—'Leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps.'

Man wants an ideal that shall call forth his enthusiasm and awaken his energies. He must have one. It is a necessity of his being, for every man is made up of two selves; there is the self of the man as he is, and there is the self of the man as he would or ought to be.

All through life this need makes itself felt. As soon as the child's mind begins to open and the little one commences to observe and think for itself, it all unconsciously looks round for an ideal; and if it has a loving mother, it finds what it wants in her. The child becomes the boy, and for a time at any rate his father is his ideal of strength and wisdom. The boy goes to school, and some schoolfellow skilled in games, or clever in learning, or born to rule his fellows, becomes his ideal. The youth passes into manhood, but even in the full maturity of his developed power, even in the consciousness of his self-reliance, he seeks an ideal still, the embodiment of strength or wisdom or industry or success. Who is there, artist, poet, author, teacher, statesman, parish priest, but has set before him at the outset of his career someone who is his ideal, not to be servilely copied by him, but whose spirit and conceptions he may drink in until they become of himself?

And not only is this ideal a deep necessity, but it is a real force. It moulds the character; it influences the action; it shapes the life; it fills with enthusiasm. It is a great motive power. And the one man to be despaired of is the man without an ideal, who has no admiration for anyone or anything who is not himself or does not belong to or form part of himself.

See, then, how Christianity steps in and meets this yearning. It puts before man an ideal, nay, the only ideal which will satisfy his needs and meet his necessities. For it has to be borne in mind that if an ideal is to be a power it must possess certain characteristics and qualities.

1. *An ideal must be definite.*—Many men mistake an idea for an ideal. But there is an immense difference between the two. An ideal may be, often is, vague and shadowy and unreal and hazy, and can profit a man little, if at all. An idea is nothing, it is not clear and distinct. And many lives are wasted because they are lived in pursuit of ideas which evade their grasp and slip from their hold and lack definiteness.

The Christian's ideal is definite. It stands out like a snow-capped mountain against the blue sky, its outline distinctly defined, each peak and crag, each chasm and precipice, clearly mapped out. The life of the Christ has been lived before men. It is beautifully portrayed for us in the four Gospels. Each inspired artist has viewed it from a somewhat different aspect: each dwells on that part which comes most closely home to him: each puts the Christ before us as he best knew and understood Him. But there is no contradiction. The features are the same. There is only that variety of expression which is the surest proof that the story of the life and death of Christ is a reality, not a fancy, a history not a fiction, a substance not a shadow. His deeds are familiar to us; His words are recorded for us. And hence, while the imitation of Christ is constantly enforced in Holy Scripture, and the necessity of cultivating a likeness to Him is again and again pressed home, certain special features are dwelt upon to which we are bidden direct our efforts and so make them more definite. Now it is holiness: 'Like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living.' Now it is charity: 'Walk in love as Christ also loved you.' Now it is patience: 'Consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls.' Now it is self-denial: 'Let each one of us please his neighbour for that which is good, not edifying, for Christ pleased not himself.' Now it is forgiveness: 'Forbearing one with another and forgiving each other even as Christ forgave you.'

2. *An ideal must be universal.*—This is what

humanity craves. An ideal ought to be, must be if it is true and noble, a bond of union. Alas, too often an ideal separates instead. Men choose each his own ideal and go on their way, wrapped up in their pursuit of it, too busy to think of, or care for, or help their struggling comrades.

The Christian's ideal is universal. It is not an esoteric religion, such as is the fashion of the day, whose chief recommendation is that it is unintelligible to the many, suited only to a select few, a small circle; it is for all, not for some. Christ is the ideal of all nations. We pride ourselves on our nationality. We admire in ourselves as a people those traits and peculiarities which distinguish us from other nations, and which, perhaps, they smile at as national eccentricities. But no people was ever so strong in this sense of nationality as the Jews. Their history and traditions tended to emphasize this, separated as they were by religion and laws and geographical situation from all other nations. And Jesus was a Jew, born of a Jewish mother, brought up in a Jewish home; His environment all through His life was Jewish, He Himself was a Jewish patriot, and yet in Him there is nothing exclusively Jewish. Take the picture out of its Jewish frame, place it in Gentile surroundings, and though the frame is changed, the picture is just as attractive and soul-inspiring. He is the ideal for all. He is the universal pattern as He is the universal Saviour.

¶ The perfect ideal of character, the final standard of conduct, is Christ Himself as He shines on us in the pages of the New Testament. We come face to face with Him in the Gospels, and the Figure that meets us there is not vague and shadowy, but clear and distinct and unlike anyone else in the world. We recognize Him, reflected and expressed more or less imperfectly in His followers. The Christian type and temper stand out distinct from all other types, and persisting through long centuries of time. The master-fact of the history of ethics is the unmistakable moral likeness between those who humbly confess that they are disciples and imitators of Jesus Christ.

Among the evidences of our religion none is more convincing than the miraculous manner in which Christ has thus impressed the stamp of His own lineaments upon men and women naturally most unlike each other. He has brought together folk of diverse nations, cradled in alien ideas, and speaking strange tongues; but more or less strongly they all remind us of Himself, they bear common witness to Him. Because wherever we see this character and way of life exemplified in the world we are driven to ask, 'Is it from heaven or of men?' And we are constrained to confess that it belongs to a Source and Origin which are divine.[1]

3. *An ideal must be perfect.*—It is in this that the danger of ideals consists. A man must have an ideal, and in his haste and lack of right judgment he oftentimes selects that which is unworthy. What is the consequence? It drags down the man, his whole character and conduct inevitably deteriorate, just as an ideal which is worthy of imitation raises and elevates both. What man requires is an ideal that defies criticism and commands universal allegiance.

The Christian ideal is perfect. Where else shall we find an ideal that can pretend to lay claim to perfection? Not in the heroes of classic times. Not in Socrates with his grave moral blemishes, Cicero with his childish vanity, Seneca with his miserable avarices and cowardice. We shall not find it among the great and good men of Old Testament times, for each one fails, aye and for the most part fails just where we thought him to be strongest. Christianity alone makes answer as it points us to the representative Man and bids us see in Him our faultless pattern: 'Who was in all things made like unto his brethren, yet without sin.' He is perfect, for all virtues are concentrated in Him. The meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, the fearlessness of Elijah are beautified colours, separated by the prism of human imperfection, but if we would find them all combined and harmonized we must look at the Christian ideal. In Christ all virtues are exquisitely balanced. There is no flaw, no inconsistency, no disproportion; but as we

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 174.

study His character, 'an undivided improvision of harmony remains.' He is perfect. This is the well nigh universal testimony of men. The perfection of the Christ is seen and acknowledged by those who agree in nothing else. In the days of His flesh those who were sent to prove His guilt returned with this testimony, 'Never man so spake.' The judge who condemned Him to death is forced to bear his witness, 'I find no fault in this man.' Rousseau writes, 'If the life and death of Socrates were the life and death of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were the life and death of a God.' John Stuart Mill says, 'Whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left a unique figure, the ideal representative, the guide of mankind.' Channing, a leader of the Unitarians, exclaims, 'I know nothing so sublime'; while Renan calls Him 'the moral chief of humanity.'

4. *An ideal must be final.*—The restlessness within man is calmed down and dies away before such an ideal. Man is quieted, is content—not with himself, for he must ever, if he is true to himself, be dissatisfied in so far as he falls short of his ideal, but he is content with his ideal, for it satisfies his deepest longings.

We cannot sum it up better than in the pithy words of Renan, 'After Jesus there is nothing more but to fructify and develop,' or as a great lay writer says of it, 'It comprehends all future history. The moral efforts of all ages will be efforts to realize this character and make it actually as it is potentially universal. Humanity as it advances in excellence will only be approximating to the Christian type. Any divergence from that will not be progress, but debasement and corruption.'[1]

The Exhaustless Example.

1 Pet. ii. 21.—'An example.'

We need an example, and our Lord satisfies this need of our nature, and that completely. In Him we have an example that is unique. He passes through life in the humblest circumstances, yet He belongs to all of us. He belongs to the human race. Until He was thirty years of age He was a working carpenter. His associates were the very poor. He was not noticed by any persons of wealth and influence. He spoke the language of the Galilean peasantry. He never learned letters: so said the Jews. He certainly never wrote a book. Literature, society, the great traditions of learning, of thought, of administration, which do so much for most of those who sway the world—these did nothing for Him; and yet He is a world-wide example. He belongs to no sect, such as Pharisee or Sadducee; to no country, for, though He is born of a Jewish mother, all races may claim Him as their own; to no historical epoch, for He had no visible part to play in the great events of His day. He does not bear their impress. He alone in the world is the universal man—the one Man who corresponds to that high ideal of humanity of which there are traces deep in the minds of everyone of us, the great Example.

1. That which strikes us first in the example which He has left is its faultlessness. We are startled by His own sense of this. He never utters one word to God or to man which implies the consciousness of a single defect. Read the lives of the great servants of God in the Old or the New Testament—of Abraham, of Moses, of Samuel, of David, of Elijah, of Peter, of Paul. They all confess sin. They all humble themselves before men. They all implore the mercy of God. Think of any great man whom you have ever known, or whose life you have read. He has feared God, loved God, worked for God through long years; yet he is full of the sense of the inconsistencies, the imperfections, pervading his life and his conduct. He is profuse in acknowledgments of his weakness and his sin. Nay, if he were not thus willing to confess his sin, you yourself would question his goodness, for what he says is, as you instinctively feel, no more than the fact. But Jesus Christ reproaches Himself for nothing, confesses nothing, regrets nothing. He is certain of all that He says and does. 'I do always those things that please the Father.' 'The Prince of this world cometh,

[1] C. J. Ridgeway.

and hath nothing in me.' Was this an illusion, or did it correspond with the fact? He was surrounded by jealous observers, by men whom not a few motives rendered anxious, if they could, to show that He was, after all, like the others around Him—a sinner. He could reckon on no forbearance, on no generosity, on no equity in His opponents; and yet He passed their criticism unscathed. 'Which of you,' He could say, 'convinceth me of sin?' And there was silence. Vague charges indeed there were, such as that He was in league with the powers of evil, or that He was a political revolutionist; but these soon refuted themselves. And ever since then, during eighteen centuries, the curiosity and passions of mankind have been at work upon the records of His life, and have succeeded no better than did His contemporaries. Now and then the critics think that they have made a good case against His moral perfection, and presently it is shown that some fundamental circumstances in His position and claims has been quite overlooked, or that some unwarranted assumption has been imported into the heart of the discussion. And again He asks, 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' and again, as at the first, there is silence.

In this sinlessness He is, although our model, yet beyond our full reach of imitation. We cannot in our maimed and broken lives reproduce the complete image of the immaculate Lamb. The best of men knows that in his best moments he is beset by motives, thoughts, inclinations from which Christ was utterly free. 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' But this does not destroy—on the contrary, it enhances—the value of Christ's ideal example. In all departments of thought and work the ideal is, strictly speaking, unattainable by man. Yet man may never lose sight of the ideal. In the Gospels, ideal human life appears in a form of flesh and blood. It is the ideal, and, therefore, it is beyond us; yet it is not the less precious as a stimulus and guide to our effort at self-improvement.

¶ We read of One in whom was no consciousness of sin, and who, therefore, in His own life could find no place for penitence. But had the Christ no part in this experience of the saints? Is there not in His life a Divine sorrow for sin, a loathing of its menace and its blight, a readiness to endure any extremity of suffering rather than submit to its power? What is this but penitence? Christ is the perfect Penitent—not for His own sins, but for the sins of men whose life He shared and to whom He would bring redemption. That is the assurance of the Cross, which is at once the source of man's repentance and the assurance of Divine forgiveness.[1]

2. Then we are struck by the balance and perfection of excellences in our Lord's human character. As a rule, if a man possesses some one excellence in an unusual degree, he will be found to exhibit some fault or shortcoming in an opposite direction. If he is dignified, he is probably proud. If he is kind and communicative, he is not unlikely to want self-respect. If he is thoughtful and reflective, he is also, it may be, cold and unsympathizing. If he is affectionate and warm-hearted, he is liable to gusts of thoughtless impulse. Is he sincere? He perhaps thinks it necessary to express his sincerity in sulkiness or ill-temper. Is he civil and considerate? He may carry his courtesy very often to the verge of insincerity. The intellectual are often wanting in affection; the affectionate are as often unintelligent. A finite and fallen nature exhausts itself by an effort in a single direction. It would almost seem to revenge its temporary success by some compensating failure. Now, of this want of balance in excellence—of this exaggeration of particular forms of excellence, which thus passes into defect—there is no trace in our Lord. Read His life over and over again with this object in view, and nothing will strike you more than its faultless proportions.

In so vast a field take one single point out of many—the balance which He observes between severity and tenderness. Certainly there is a severity in His attitude towards evil, especially towards insincerity, which startles us. It escapes from Him only now and then, but with terrible force. He calls the genera-

[1] *The Spirit of Man*, 212.

tion in which He lives adulterous, evil, sinful, wicked, perverse. He says that the blood of all the prophets that has been shed from the foundation of the world shall be required of it. He announces that Capernaum, which is exalted to heaven, shall be cast down to hell. He is unsparing in His denunciations of the influential classes of the Pharisees and the scribes:—'Ye love greetings in the market-place; ye bind heavy burdens on men's shoulders; ye yourselves touch them not with one of your fingers; ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; ye strain at a gnat and swallow a camel; ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; whited sepulchres, ye appear righteous before men, within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.' And yet there is a tenderness in our Lord which is rarely found in combination with such severity. He is not a cold philosopher who exposes weakness and has no heart for sorrow. He does not condescend to us from a superior level. He is among us, touched with the feeling of our infirmities as one of ourselves. He is at home in Bethany. Jesus loves Martha and her sister and Lazarus. He sheds tears at the grave of Lazarus. He weeps over Jerusalem. He absolves the sinful woman. He takes the part of the convicted adulteress against her accusers: 'Neither do I condemn thee.' All this would be easy enough if He were indifferent to moral evil. He hates it as man never hated it before; yet He is tenderness itself towards its victims.

3. Consider, again, a feature which runs through His whole character—its simplicity. In nothing that He says or does can we detect any trace of striving after effect. The number of men of whom anything remotely like this is true is very small indeed. The effort to create an impression is the result sometimes of timidity, sometimes of vanity, but it always impairs moral beauty whether of speech or of work. Our Lord always says what He has to say in the most natural and unpretending words. His sentences unfold themselves without effort or system, just as persons and occasions demand. He uses the language not of the schools, but of the people, as under other circumstances we are sure He would have used the language not of the people, but of the schools. He is thus at once simple and profound—profound as was never man before—because so simple. We all of us understand the Sermon on the Mount, or the last discourse in the supper-room, and yet we are all conscious, dimly though it be, of the heights and depths which reach away in the infinitude behind the familiar words. He takes the illustrations that come ready to His hand, or that meet His eye—the birds of the air, the rain, the red and lowering sky, the lily of the field, the grain of mustard seed, the corn, the ruined tower of Siloam; and on these He grafts this or that fragment of the everlasting truth. We cannot enrich His teaching by any additions of our own. We cannot but disfigure its matchless beauty if we try to do so. And as with His words, so with His actions. He acts with a view to the glory of the Eternal Father, and with a view to nothing else. Hence the directness and transparency of His conduct, which we feel in every detail of it. He is a poor man. He never affects to be independent of His class. He is never eccentric. His mode of life, His dress, His habits, are without one trace of pretension or singularity. He pursues His great work sitting by a well, or on a mountain, or in a fishing-boat, or on the shore of a lake, or in a synagogue, or in one of the porches of the Temple, or as He walks along the road. Every situation offers an opportunity, and He uses it. He attends a wedding; He cures a paralytic; He stoops to write upon the ground; He eats with a Pharisee; he raises a corpse to life; He washes the feet of His disciples—just as it comes, just as is right from day to day, from hour to hour, from minute to minute. The most important and useful acts follow after the most trivial and ordinary. There is no effort, no disturbing or pretentious movement. All is as simple as if all were commonplace. It is this absence of anything like an attempt to produce unusual impressions which reveals a soul possessed with a sense of the majesty and power of truth. Depend upon it, in the degree in which any man becomes really great, he becomes also simple.

¶ When Dante wrote the *Divina Commedia*

in Italian, the language of the people was despised. 'Why,' said a monk to him, when thou art so learned, hast thou written such a work in the vulgar tongue?' 'It is,' said the poet, 'that all may know our hopes, and that the wife of the peasant may comprehend our faith.'[1]

4. One further point to be remarked in our Lord's example is the stress that it lays upon those forms of excellence which make no great show, such as patience, humility, and the like. As we read the Gospels we are led to see that the highest type of human excellence consists less in acting well than in suffering well. The ancient world never understood this. With it virtue was always active force. Yet the conditions of our human life are such that, whether we will or not, we are more frequently called upon to endure than to act; and upon the spirit in which we endure everything depends. Our Lord restored the passive virtues to their forgotten and true place in human conduct. He revealed the beauty, the majesty of patience, of meekness, of uncomplaining submission. He achieved more work than any of the sons of men; but we may dare to say that He suffered more than He achieved, or that His work was largely achieved by suffering. It is this side of His example which St. Peter is thinking of as being so useful to the Christian slaves to whom, for the moment, he is writing: 'Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' Christ had before Him a purpose of infinite beneficence—that of recovering man to God and to endless happiness; yet in carrying it out He met with scorn, resistance, hatred, persecution. He was suspected, denounced, traduced; His name was cast out as evil. Justice, alike in its form and in its spirit, was conspicuously violated in order to crush Him. Religion itself was prostituted to the lowest purposes of private animosity. He was led forth to die, amidst a tempest of denunciations which were from first to last unmerited; and the ingratitude and the hatred of man pierced His very soul. Yet no unkind or impatient word falls from Him. He bears in silence the contradiction of sinners. He prays, 'Father, forgive them.' He is obedient unto death.

The power of that perfect Pattern has not ceased with the passing of the centuries. Far away from Galilee and Jerusalem men are walking in these very footprints. In different lands and climes, amid conditions undreamt of then, they have failed to discover any higher standard of conduct, any more perfect law of life. They are discovering the meaning of the strange words of Thomas à Kempis: *Crux semper parata est et ubique te exspectat*—the Cross is always ready for you and awaits you everywhere. The Timeless Pattern meets an endless need and gives an endless challenge. There is much more in Christianity than this; but even if there were no more than this, Christianity would be a miracle.

[1] J. Ker, *Thoughts for Heart and Life*, 196.

The Tree.

1 Pet. ii. 24.—'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sins might live unto righteousness.'

In the New Testament the Cross of Christ is put before us in three ways—as a sacrifice for sin, as a revelation of God, and as a motive-power. We are bound to consider it in each of these ways if we want to arrive at the utmost limit of our knowledge, and at the results it is meant to achieve for us.

1. *A sacrifice for sin.*—The most difficult side of the Atonement to speak of is unquestionably the first. It has created most difficulties, for it is just the one upon which the popular theology is most apt to insist as the only aspect, and to endeavour to explain by the most bald literalism. Men are constantly and confidently invited to trust in the propitiation offered by Christ: 'Trust in the propitiation of the Son, and you will be forgiven, you will be reconciled to God.' That is the gospel, the good news, so the popular theology tells us; we must trust in the propitiation offered by Christ, and all will be well.

The way to meet it is to say, 'There is this side of things, and it is most true, but it is

not the only side.' If the Cross reveals God's mercy, it reveals His justice also. It is pressed upon us over and over again in the New Testament, as something not only to trust in, but to measure ourselves by, and to work from. Yet there is this side also, and its prominence is unquestionable. Christ did die for us, and made by His one oblation a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Deeply mysterious as this side of things is—yes, deeply mysterious, for it affects the interior relations of the Father and the Son—it asserts that the Father accepted the death, or the obedience pushed unto death (in the fullest form), of the Son as a propitiation for our sins. It comes to this, that without the Cross the love of God could not have reached us. If we think what it really means, we see how deep a mystery this statement involves.

(1) We can see that sin deserves punishment; that suffering is its just result, its inevitable consequence tied to it; that if God does not assert this principle by always punishing sin, He must assert it in some other way; and it belonged to Christ, as Head of the race and as moral Ruler of mankind, to have that principle asserted in His own Person on behalf of His brethren; this was 'the cup' that did not 'pass from' Him, that belonged to Him—that He took suffering on Himself lest it should reach His brethren. That statement, carefully guarded, anyone can accept; but that is a very different conception from the arbitrary substitution by the Father of one innocent for all the guilty, to which the popular theology often reduces it.

(2) Again, we can get another light, and escape the serious difficulties that ensue from the bald statement that the Son appeased the wrath of the Father by dwelling on the fact, the undoubted fact, that the Atonement is the work of the Father as well as of the Son; an offering made by the Father when 'he spared not his only Son.' There was ever—even in the darkest moment of apparent desertion—there was ever a mysterious union between the Father and the Son, which rendered it possible for God 'at once to endure and to inflict suffering, and to do both under conditions which constitute both the infliction and the endurance to be the grandest moment in the moral history of God.'

These are glimpses into the mystery, but they do not explain the inexplicable. We can only say God has revealed to us that He, for Christ's sake, forgives sins; and we can see two or three things which help us a little to understand why it was necessary that Christ should voluntarily suffer so much. But directly we have said that, we feel that the full knowledge of this mystery is beyond us; that it is 'dark with excess of light,' that it is so high we cannot reach it, and so wide we cannot grasp it. We cannot solve it, we cannot understand the unfathomable nature and ways of God; we can see a little way, enough to show us how much more there is to be seen. Is it not fitting that it should be so? A God we could comprehend and understand would be no God to us. He would be even less than one of ourselves; for it is true of the deepest natures we know, that we cannot always comprehend or understand them.

¶ A student went to a professor of theology not long ago, and asked him how long it took him to understand the Atonement. He answered, all his life. Thinking perhaps there might be some mistake, the young man went to another professor, who taught the very doctrine in his class. 'How long did it take you, sir,' he asked, 'to understand the Atonement?' The professor thought a moment, and looked him in the face. '*Eternity*,' he said, '*Eternity;* and I shall not understand it then.'[1]

2. *A revelation of God.*—But this is not all; we can find in the New Testament other aspects of the Cross more within the bounds of our comprehension than the one we have been looking at. The Cross of Christ reveals the Father; it uncovers, unveils, the eternal Love of God for men. When we drink in its full meaning, we feel that the prayer, 'Lord shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us,' has been justified and answered.

The Cross shows us the Father, shows us Him whom men had misconceived. For what

[1] Henry Drummond, *The Ideal Life*, 182.

was the root-fault of all religions that preceded Christ? It was that they did not believe that God loved them. They thought of Him as an offended and austere Being, who needed to be appeased by gifts and sacrifices before He could be gracious to them. Christ came, above all, to reveal the Father; to say, 'He that hath the Son hath the Father'; and He came to convince men that they had misconceived the Father. He came to teach them that God would Himself make the atonement which they had thought He was bent on demanding, to assure them that His love for them had never ceased, and would never loosen its hold. He unveiled the hidden love of God. He showed how far it would go, how much it would bear and do; that men might again be reconciled to Him who had been calling them ever since the Fall, 'My child, My child, why hast thou forsaken me?'

The passages that speak to us of God 'sparing not his only Son,' of God 'commending his love to us,' will serve to bring this aspect to our minds, and it will balance the other one. We can feel at home here. We know what love is. We can conceive, even if we have not known for ourselves, how disinterested, how unselfish pure love may be. We have read or heard of it; and therefore, when we are told that God loves us, and that the Cross is His own witness how much He loves us, we have something intelligible to lay hold of. Tell a man that God forgives him for the sake of Christ's death, and he gratefully accepts a deliverance from a sense of guilt; but if that is all you tell him, he will not be likely to keep from sin in the future. But tell him that God gave His only and beloved Son to live and die, that He might show how utterly He loves him, how ready He is to forgive and bless him, and he understands you. Tell him that the greatest grief he can cause God is to live a selfish, careless life, and that God looks for an answer because He cares for it, and you lay in his heart the foundations of a responsive love which will spring up and cleanse his whole nature.

¶ Stand in front of the beautiful marble reredos in St. Paul's Cathedral, and you will see in the centre a great representation of the Crucifixion. Then lift your eyes to the superscription over it, and you will read these words: '*Sic Deus dilexit mundum*' (God so loved the world). The link between these two could only have been thus designed by one whose spiritual sense had sought and found the very heart and purpose of the Incarnation. For the death of Christ our Lord has never yet been—nor ever can be—explained as a mere fact or event in ordinary human history. It must be viewed in the light that is divinely given. Not only does the Cross form on one side the darkest shadow ever thrown by sin upon a world of sorrow; but, by a gracious paradox, it reflects on the other side the brightest gleam this earth has ever caught of the love that shines from heaven. On the Cross of Calvary God sees His perfect law of righteousness (or justice) vindicated to the utmost. And there we see His love for fallen man displayed in the Divine Sacrifice, by which the best He had to give was not withheld from us.[1]

3. *A motive power.*—But even this aspect of the Atonement has its characteristic dangers. Just as those who think of Christ's Cross only as a deliverance may say, 'He has paid the penalty, and I take the reward,' and so sink into immoral selfishness, so those who think of Christ's Cross only as a manifestation of the love of God may come to rely on that love without any adequate attempt to respond to it. One of the chief sneers levelled at Christians has been that they 'hold a creed which persuades them that they may be delivered from punishment without being delivered from sin,' or which quickens in them 'a weak sentiment incapable of producing the elements of a righteous and manly character'; and therefore we must speak of the Cross not only as a sacrifice and a revelation, but also as a motive power. Then we understand it most easily. To quicken the love within us, to make us glow with responsive emotion, is the moral effect of the Cross of Christ. The sacrifice of Christ breaks the power, heals the wounds, washes away the stains of sin, through inspiring within man a love which is the result of its own inspiration.

[1] J. W. W. Moeran.

All the phrases in the New Testament about 'washing away sin,' 'cleansing by the blood of Christ,' become unintelligible directly we lose sight of this aspect of the Cross, which gives them their real meaning. Blood does not cleanse literally, it defiles and stains. To wash a man in blood is not to cleanse him, but to make him foul; but when we understand that the blood stands for the life freely offered, the sacrifice, and that that sacrifice manifests the love of God, then love kindles a responsive love in its objects, and this God-given love, inspired within us, is a fountain which heals wounds, and cleanses and washes away the stains of sin. We all know what the love of man for man, when really enkindled, can do to make life new, and so we are able to see how the love of man for Christ, really enkindled, can change man, and can break the power of evil habit, and in that true way deliver him from evil.

None other Lamb, none other Name,
None other Hope in heaven or earth or sea,
None other Hiding-place from guilt and
shame,
None beside Thee.

My faith burns low, my hope burns low,
Only my heart's desire cries out in me
By the deep thunder of its want and woe,
Cries out to Thee.

Lord, Thou art Life tho' I be dead,
Love's fire Thou art, however cold I be:
Nor heaven have I, nor place to lay my head,
Nor home, but Thee.[1]

His Stripes.

1 Pet. ii. 24.—'By whose stripes ye were healed.'

When Scripture speaks of us as needing healing, it is not merely a figure, it is a reality. Sin contains suffering as an essential element in itself. It is a disease that impairs and detracts from the fullness and force of our life. The world is wanting in something. We are not whole. And whenever the strain of life is severest this becomes most obvious. When poverty enfeebles and cuts down supplies, when work overtaxes, and the conditions of existence are specially exacting, then the defect is most acutely felt, and comes most clearly to light. It inflames, as it were, the whole man or the whole community. It racks with outward pain or inward agony. But everywhere this sense of defect, this want of wholeness, is present more or less, exciting to all sorts of desperate expedients for relief, creating the most grotesque appetites and desires, and urging to the most unnatural and pitiful extremes.

1. Sin, then, is a disease, but the Apostle offers a cure. It is described as a healing or making whole, and it is effected by the stripes of Christ. 'By his stripes' we are 'healed.' That is, by what Christ suffered our sufferings are brought to an end; their source or fountain is staunched. But how are we to understand this? It is true in a sense that all suffering, when it becomes severe, can be cured only by the suffering of others. It imposes this penalty to some extent on those who undertake to relieve it. The strength and skill of the physician are often heavily taxed to save his patient. The nurse or attendants have to watch through anxious days and nights, sometimes to see the tide turn only after their own health has been sacrificed. It was in this sense, apparently, St. Matthew understood those other words of Isaiah when he applied them to Christ: 'Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses,' that is, He burdened Himself with the toil and strain of their removal. And the same remark is true in a still higher degree in the treatment of moral evil. To check even venial faults, so as to help the defaulter to renounce them, requires a patient tact and affection which are rarely found combined. And when the venial faults have developed into sinful and vicious habits, how much greater the long-suffering and faith, the wisdom and steady self-control required to cope with them successfully. How many bitter disappointments and humbling defeats must be borne when the victory seemed to be almost won. Can anything indeed but the charity that beareth all things, and hopeth all

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

things, rally the heart to try again, and continue its devoted efforts to recover the offender, and overcome evil with good?

> If my feeble prayer can reach thee,
> O my Saviour, I beseech thee,
> Even as thou hast died for me,
> More sincerely
> Let me follow where thou leadest,
> Let me, bleeding as thou bleedest,
> Die, if dying I may give
> Life to one who asks to live,
> And more nearly,
> Dying thus, resemble thee![1]

2. There can be no doubt that in dealing with us Jesus suffers in this way infinitely more acutely than we do, in proportion to His deeper hatred of sin and deeper love of holiness. Our every relapse into evil, our every act of disobedience, our doubts and misgivings, make large and constant demands upon His faithfulness and love, till we sometimes feel that even His patience will be exhausted, and He may refuse to be burdened any longer with such unprofitable and troublesome dependents. But, however great the sufferings of Christ in this sense may have been and still are, it is not to such that the Apostle here refers. He is thinking not of what Christ may still endure from the perversity and faithlessness of men, but of something which He endured once, and endures no longer. The very word He uses leads us in this direction. It suggests neither the suffering involved in the doing of good, nor the strain which a loving sympathy has to bear in sharing the sorrows of its fellows. Stripes are imposed by someone else. They indicate the infliction of a pain that is not the direct consequence of our own action, but to which we are subjected by the action of others. Moreover, they necessarily suggest the idea of punishment. They are a chastisement, and mark the man who receives them as obnoxious to justice and dealt with accordingly. Now it is by the sufferings of Christ so understood that the Apostle says we are healed. And he is in strictest harmony with the whole teaching of the New Testament in so far as it relates to this point. It is not by what Christ endured from the contradiction of sinners against Himself, from the obduracy of the rulers, and the fickleness of the mob; it is not by His uncomplaining submission to insult and reproach, nor by the virtue that went out of Him in curing the sick, nor yet by His continuous sacrifice of Himself in His ministry of grace, that He has healed the sores of the world, and brought a balsam for every wound. It is primarily and mainly by what is known as His Passion, by the sufferings that centred in His cross, when by the hands of wicked men He was crucified and slain. 'In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins'; 'He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God'; 'He is the propitiation for our sins.'

3. And in what capacity did Christ die? What was it about His death that invested it with its peculiar power? Was His cross, like the martyr's stake, an eternal witness to the strength of conviction, a homage to the truth that was to inspire perenially a like heroic constancy and fortitude? Or was it a sublime exhibition of love—a love that, withholding nothing, poured itself out unto death for the salvation of men? It was all this and much more besides. For it is neither in their testimony to truth nor in the love which they revealed that the saving power of Christ's sufferings resides. That which makes them a cure for us is the fact that they were borne as a penalty for sin. 'The chastisement of our peace was upon him.' They were stripes. And they were stripes, not for His own sin, because He had none, but for ours. 'He was made sin for us, who knew no sin.' He was the 'Lamb without blemish and without spot.' The sin for which He suffered was the sin of those who inflicted the suffering, representing as they did the world of their time, and indeed the world of all time. In them the evil that is characteristic of humanity declared itself. It assumed and defined its relation to the pure and perfect One, and its relation was that of hatred unto death. By this sin He died, and for it. For it, because He was

[1] Longfellow.

not crucified helplessly, as one to whom there was no alternative. 'He gave himself for us'; 'He bare our sins in his own body on the tree'; 'By his stripes we are healed.' Yes, by His stripes. For all sin is due to our separation from God. It marks the ebb of life, the lowering of vital force, the feverishness that ensues from this fatal severance. And what hinders the healing of the breach is just the fact that this sin is the violation of a righteous law which refuses to be at peace with us till its claims are satisfied.

¶ When the merit of Christ's atoning sacrifice becomes ours, peace, sweet, satisfying, eternal peace, floods the soul. This is Christ's promise. 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.' The world's peace is the peace of compromise; Christ's is the peace of reconciliation. It is the peace of reconciliation that is musical. It is a song that can be sung only in the sight of Calvary's blood-stained cross, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Without an altar of atonement there can be no song of reconciliation.[1]

4. And these claims are met by the sacrifice of Christ. 'God was in him, reconciling the word to himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses.' And now the stumbling-block has been removed, the gulf has been bridged. Through Him who died, and is alive again, and liveth for evermore, God and the world are brought into touch. The streams of life have begun to flow into its wasted framework, and wherever they reach the ravages of sin are checked. Peace comes in place of restlessness, content for dissatisfaction, hope for despair, and the sceptre of fear is banished. Surely but slowly the love of goodness is developed. The long-imprisoned forces of the human heart are loosed, and go forth upon the earth charged with ministries of mercy. For what awakens the instinct of compassion like receiving compassion one's self? What creates commiseration for others like the tender pity that has spent itself upon us in the hour of our distress? And Christ's healing relieves from a pain and apprehension that can scarcely be uttered. It triumphs over an unworthiness that is deeper than words. It brings a hope and gladness that transfigures life, and opens a fountain of new inspiration.

Jesus, was ever Love like Thine,
So strong and permanent and pure!
Strange Mystery this of Love Divine,
That Stripes should heal, and Death should cure.

How costly was the medicine, Lord,
The medicine which Thy wounds supplied!
That I might live, to Health restored,
My Lamb, my good Physician died.

My God, my All, O Christ, Thou art,
On Thee for every good I call,
Thy Death shall Life and Strength impart;
Oh Christ, Thou art my God, my All.[1]

5. What labour is then too great, what enterprise too forlorn, when His grace has healed us, and bound up our painful wounds? To men who lived in ancient times, and knew the gradual decay of all that had been purest and best, it seemed a useless task to try to bring back again the golden age. The steady march and progress of things from bad to worse seemed to defy all effort to arrest its progress, and still more to turn the tide. It was vain to suppose that the dead weight of misery could be permanently lifted from the world, or its ungovernable wickedness with its wild plunges into anarchy perfectly subdued. There seemed nothing for it but to make the downward progress less headstrong and abrupt, to break, so far as could be, the fatal fall and catastrophe of things. This was the best that the wisest and most sanguine could hope for, and many could not venture so far. They were content to protect themselves without considering others, and pilot their own lives through the surrounding perils with the least possible risk. But when the saving grace of Christ appeared, and the truth of His sacrifice was brought home to men, when they saw the atonement that conscience craved, and God at last brought

[1] J. I. Vance, *Tendency*, 201.

[1] Charles Wesley.

nigh, there leaped to light the strength of an immortal joy. Inward and downward, and into the very heart of the world, there worked the power of an endless life. Hope, born of the deep consciousness of redemption, flung itself with a magnificent boldness upon all the ills that flesh is heir to. There was no foe that could not be conquered, no misery that could not be relieved. The tide had turned. The watchword was, 'Forward'—'forgetting the things that are behind.' Messengers of peace and good will hastened abroad. Right struggled to subordinate the power of might, and has never given up the fight. Philanthropy arose, and the echo of her footsteps was heard in the waste and desolate places of the earth. And what is our magnificent array of modern charities, our agencies of help that reach out a hand of succour to every soul depressed below the general level of comfort or advantage? What are the labours of the economist, the statesman, the physician, as they push their way into the problems before them with a sure triumphant conviction of ultimate victory, but the fruits of that great healing of Christ that has turned darkness into light, and the dull wretchedness of despair into bright and keen-eyed hope? 'By his stripes we are healed.'

Winning One's Husband.

1 Pet. iii. 1.—'If any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won.'

THE Apostle wishes to point out how Christian wives may be able to win their pagan husbands to the faith of Christ. His thought is this: If the husbands oppose the word, the wives should all the more diligently seek to preserve a Christian walk, in order by it to win over their husbands, even without words, without preaching, and without exhortation on their part.

The Apostle almost condescends to pun in order to enforce his point, using 'word' in two different senses, indicated by the presence and absence of the definite article. 'Submit . . . that if any obey not the word'—there is no doubt as to what 'word' that is: we have not forgotten the Apostle's recent reference to 'the word of the Lord, which endureth for ever'—'they may without a word be won by the behaviour of their wives.'

1. Much is possible without language; character, when true, strong, and tender, possesses a persuasiveness all its own, and often a persuasiveness beyond that of the finest eloquence. Words may only irritate, argument provoke argument, and debate end by leaving the parties farther asunder than ever; but the silent action of superior character and well-ordered conduct compels attention and conviction. Without language the glorious things of Nature fascinate and subdue; and the voiceless oratory of pure living acts similarly. In many cases argument is impossible, it is inexpedient, and, for various reasons, frequently unavailing; but the power of a sincere life is always possible—it asserts itself without offence, and works conviction by an irresistible logic. Much may be wrought by a devout woman whose partner is unbelieving. In thousands of instances the woman saves the husband. Without reasonings, expostulations, or rebukes she shows the power and grace of Christ to make life strong and pure; and her modesty, patience, love, and self-denial accomplish what the tongue cannot, wonderful as that member sometimes proves to be.

¶ When a betrothal takes place in the modern Greek Church, the priest offers prayers, imploring God to make the event a happy one, and to bless the dowry, so that the outer ornaments of the bride may be a continual incitement to her to adorn her soul with such angelic virtues as are proper to the condition of matrimony into which she is about to enter. Whenever this prayer proves effectual, and the woman's jewels of gold are outshone by her virtues, and her brocades look coarse by the side of the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, her influence upon husband, children, and servants is not less than magical.[1]

2. How, then, does she win her husband?

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

(1) By her 'chaste behaviour.' The first element in winning womanhood is the wearing of the white robe. The spirit is perfectly clean. 'The King's daughter is all glorious within.' All her powers consort together like a white-robed angel-band. In every room of her life one can find the fair linen, 'clean and white.' In the realm of the imagination her thoughts hover and brood like white doves. In the abode of motive her aspirations are as sweet and pure as the breathings of a little child. In the home of feeling, her affections are as incorruptible as rays of light. If you move among the powers of her speech, on the threshold of her lips you will find no stain, no footprint of 'anything that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.' In the inner life of the ideal woman, no unclean garment can be found, for everything wears the white robe. The spirit is 'chaste.' But chasteness is more than cleanliness. The stone is not only white, it is chiselled into delicacy. Character is not left in the rough; it is refined into thoughtful finish. The substance is not only pure, it is worked into beauty. It is not only true in matter, it is consummated in exquisite manner. If the analogy of purified womanhood is to be found in the whiteness of the snow, its finish is to be found in the graceful curves and forms of the snowdrifts. 'Chaste behaviour' is just the refined purity of all the activities of the inner life.

She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
She guards them from the steep;
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
She has her soul to keep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.[1]

The husband 'beholds' her chaste behaviour. The word used by the Apostle is a singular one, expressing the attitude of surprise and wonder. The husband gazes upon the purity and winsomeness of the wife as one gazes on a mystery, and he is conscious that at the bottom of it is a strange fact and power which he has not yet comprehended. One can almost see the heathen husband sitting down and gazing at his Christian wife and wondering what to make of her. Coming up against a problem so, he will come up against an evangel, for he will come up against the mystery of a redeemed personality, in which the inner is more than the outer, though the outer may have its own standards of seemly beauty.

(2) The wife's spirit is meek. There is nothing cringing or servile in the disposition. It is infinitely removed from the saddening, paralysing obeisance of the slave. 'I am meek,' cries the Master; and can we detect anything fawning or fearful about the Son of Man? In the interpretation of the great word let us eliminate from our minds every suggestion of servility and servitude. Meekness is just the opposite of self-aggressiveness, and violent self-assertion. Meekness is just self-suppression issuing in beneficent service. Meekness does not tread the narrow path of a selfish ambition, tending only to some self-enriching end. Meekness takes broad, inclusive ways to large and unselfish ends. Meekness seeks the enrichment of life through the comprehension of the many. Self-assertion may appear to succeed, but it never really wins. It may gain a telescope, but it loses an eye. It may win an estate, but it loses the sense of the landscape. It may gain in goods what it loses in power. It may gain the whole world, and lose its own soul. The meek are the only true 'heirs.' They gain an ever finer perceptiveness, and life reveals itself in richer perfumes and flavours and essences with every passing day. 'The meek shall inherit the earth.'

[1] Alice Meynell.

(3) A quiet spirit! The opposite of that which we describe as 'loud.' The 'loud' woman is the ostentatious woman, moving about in broad sensations. 'He shall not cry'; there was nothing loud about Christ, there was an absence of the scream: 'neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets'; there was nothing about Him of the artifice of self-advertisement. The Master was never 'loud,' and so He was a most winsome and welcome companion. The 'loud' woman is never companionable. The difference between a 'loud' woman and a woman of 'quiet spirit' is the difference between fireworks and sunshine, between a quiet genial glow and a crackling bonfire. The Apostle contrasts the 'quiet spirit' with the love of sensational attire and loud adornments, the disposition to arrest attention by vulgar dazzle and display. Such a disposition is a fatal foe to real communion. After all we cannot bask in the glare of fireworks; we rejoice in the quiet sunlight. Home is made of quiet materials, and one of the elements in the constitution of beautiful wedded fellowship is 'a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.'

¶ No truer helpmeet was ever given to an earthly saint. All that she was to her husband, and through him to others, all that she was in herself not even her husband could have told. She, too, gave her life a ransom for many. Her quiet peacefulness of nature, her deep, strong gentleness, first drew him to her, and in over half a century of closest wedded life he had never sounded the full depths of her self-giving, soul-posed nature. She stood between him and all the small worries of life. She sustained him in all his great endeavour. Her love of God's Word, her intimate knowledge of it, was constantly helping him. Her quietness of spirit and her love were a constant rest to his ardent, impetuous nature. 'She was my wisest counsellor,' he said. 'She shared and enriched every part of my work; she lightened every burden; she consecrated every trouble in her utter loyalty to the Lord of her life.'[1]

She is a woman: one in whom
  The spring-time of her childish years
Hath never lost its fresh perfume,
Though knowing well that life hath room
  For many blights and many tears.

I love her with a love as still
  As a broad river's peaceful might,
Which, by high tower and lowly mill,
Goes wandering at its own sweet will,
  And yet does ever flow aright.

And, on its full, deep breast serene,
  Like quiet isles my duties lie;
It flows around them and between,
And makes them fresh, and fair, and green,
  Sweet homes wherein to live and die.[1]

[1] J. L. Paton, *John Brown Paton*, 523.

The Christian Life.

1 Pet. iii. 8.—'Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.'

We are continually apt to forget, in the use we make of the Epistles, the circumstances under which they were written: we perpetually distort the Apostles' language by not putting ourselves into the place of those to whom it was addressed. This Epistle was written to the Christian congregations scattered throughout Asia Minor, to congregations of all ranks of society, of all degrees of understanding; all of them by becoming Christians had separated themselves more or less from their former friends and associates, from their former ties, from their former affections, from their former pursuits. Conversion to the early Christians must have meant in every case an utter dislocation of their daily life, an utter upturning of all they had previously had to guide them, an utter destruction of those conventional rules of morality which must always weigh so greatly with every man, and which half-allure and half-compel most of us nowadays to respectability at least. All this the early Christian convert lost at once by his voluntary act. He was outside society, outside politics, outside most of the amusements and interests of those around him. Christ supplied more than all he laid aside. Had he lost friends? There was One above who had

[1] James Russell Lowell.

loved with a love that called forth his passionate adoration. Was he severed from his former pursuits? Christ had laid down His heavenly glory to live on earth for him? Were his former ties broken asunder? Through Christ he had been adopted into the family of God. Were his affections wounded in the severance? There rang in his ears the words of Christ: 'Whoso loveth father or mother or wife more than me is not worthy of me.' Truly if the sword had been sent upon the earth, the victim would kiss its blade and deck its hilt with garlands. To him Christ was all in all: he hung upon Christ's words, he lived in Christ's life. He heard ever in his ears

> A human voice
> Saying, 'Oh heart I made, a heart beats here!
> . . . . . .
> For love I gave thee, with myself to love,
> And thou must love me who have died for thee!'

This, then, we must always remember if we would understand the fundamental principle to which the Apostles appeal in their addresses to the Christian converts: this fervid, passionate, personal love of the believer towards Christ, as seeing in Him all that could call forth the deepest feelings of the soul, all that could attract to the most adoring reverence. But it was hard to carry this love throughout all the course of their daily life, to weave its lofty aspirations into the coarse web of daily duties; they shrank from exposing their deepest feelings to the common gaze. In comparison with Christ the world looked cold and grey, their old occupations seemed strange to them and uninteresting. It was hard to bring their overwhelming feeling into accordance with their petty duties and ordinary tasks.

It was, then, to men so circumstanced that the Apostles wrote, and their moral precepts were in all cases built up round this central idea, were perpetually spoken with reference to it. To make the heart a temple fit for His indwelling, to illumine life with the light of His perpetual presence, to make every action be done for Him, every word be spoken for Him, to show the believer how he might always have Christ with him, how he need never lose sight of Him, how he might transform his every action so as to do it for Christ, how he might fight as Christ's soldier against the world until he overcame it—this was the object of the Apostles' precepts; this is what Christian morality must always aim at doing.

St. Peter traces in the text the gradual development of Christian love, as it proceeds through all the different spheres of life. 'Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.' Let us examine the various steps of this analysis, let us trace the process which the Apostle is here describing, and see if it may not apply to ourselves.

1. First, 'Be ye all of the same mind.' From the love of Christ follows first and most plainly Christian unanimity; unanimity in its strictest sense of agreement, or rather identity of convictions, on fundamental points: about that there can be no doubt. Christ lived for all, and all to whom the Apostle was speaking loved Him, and were striving to follow Him. Let them never forget that fact; let it be always before their minds in all they did. Whatever differences might arise amongst them, however wrong they might think one another's conduct, however they might be inclined to withstand one another if necessary to the face, however much one might think another had gone astray and acted wrongly, still no feelings of anger, no holy grief, no necessity for reproof should ever be allowed for a moment to get the better of, or obscure the conviction of, the oneness of their mind in Christ. Their paths might be in different directions, they might not be able to understand one another's course, the world's mists might so gather round them that they were hid from one another's sight, and forced to grope onward each one for himself; but let them never forget that, above the region of mists and clouds, the eye of each was fixed upon the same Sun of Righteousness, each was longing for those rays to dispel the fog and darkness, that so each might see and recognize his fellow, and each clasp the other to his arms with tears of joy and love.

Such must be the beginning of the Christian life to each of us too. We must be of the same mind, or rather we must see that we are of the same mind, that it is impossible that any, even the meanest who calls upon Christ's name in the most inarticulate accents, should not be one in heart and soul with us, should not be to us in very truth a brother. How can we be content to stagger on through life, content to jostle against and stumble over one another, without a thought of our common goal, without a care for mutual assistance? No, if we are Christ's at all, we must recognize our fellow-countrymen in Christ; recognize them as countrymen wherever we find them, and in however miserable a plight, recognize them freely and heartily and honestly, and by so doing we shall come at once to the next step of the Apostle's admonition, 'have compassion one of another,' feel with one another.

¶ The idea has got into the minds of some of the younger men of the present time that man's life is a sort of brutal 'struggle for existence,' man against man and nation against nation. In civilized countries men are made to respect the person, the liberty, and the property of others; but within these bounds they may be as callously indifferent to the rights of others, and as unscrupulous in their methods of 'making' money out of them, as they please. And the law of the land is the only law acknowledged by many. The game is, that each must do the best he can for himself in these conditions. Consideration of the good of others, social justice, serving rather than getting—all this is merely ridiculous 'sentiment.'

If you hold this false and atrocious conception of human relationship, cast it out of your mind like poison. If they are so inclined, men may struggle against and oppress each other, and so make life a hell. But there is no necessity for them to strive thus: there is ample opportunity and provision in the world for the very best for all, if men will only obey the moral law. The phenomenon presented by the life of man on this globe is not that of a multitude of animals struggling against each other for the means of existence, but a host of developing souls, members of one body, bound together by mutual interests; and your only safety is in holding to this conception.[1]

2. Is it not necessary that those engaged upon a common quest should feel the deepest interest in one another's success? Truly if we could but realize that we are a band of wanderers in a strange land—of all ranks in society, it may be, of all levels of intellectual power, of all degrees of mental culture and physical strength—would we not as we wandered on, longing each of us for different things, the weary for rest, the strong for further progress, the wise for more knowledge, the luxurious for more ease, would we not still each of us feel the necessity of helping the other with all his might? Strong and weak, wise and ignorant, all would feel the absolute necessity of holding together; to separate would be destruction, to quarrel would be ruin. And so the wise man would, with a smile of comfort, explain to the simple that he need not be afraid of some phenomenon of Nature which had struck his eyes unexpectedly for the first time. The strong man would carry the weak tenderly and gently in his arms and listen to his moans without irritation, and try to comfort him by kindly assurances that the rest of the journey would be easier, and the worst would soon be over. The man of culture or rank would not refuse to take his part cheerfully in the daily work, but would do it with all the greater glee because his interests lay elsewhere and it could never become to him mechanical or absorbing. Sympathy would come to us quite naturally if we could keep our unity of object clearly before us. But this is hard for us to do. Life seems so differently allotted to each of us. We cannot realize that it is the same after all, that each of us can help or impede infinitely every human soul we come across in our daily walk. To feel with our brethren—how great a thing it is! Great both for them and for us! How the crushed and wounded soul revives before the look that tells it its woes are not unheeded. How the despairing spirit clings with an agonized grasp to the words that tell him he is not

[1] R. H. Hodgson, *Glad Tidings*, 73.

absolutely alone in the world, till hope comes back. How the timorous who crouches in hiding to escape the crash and whirl and tumult that life presents to him will treasure up a cheering speech, and begin to stand erect. How, on the other hand, he who gives such sympathy will gain in strength of character, in depth of feeling, in knowledge of the mysteries of life. He will learn most fully the nature of God by studying most closely man, His greatest work. He will learn knowledge of himself and experience of others, learn caution and wisdom to guide himself and his fellows, learn to look through appearances to realities, learn the confidence that comes only of humility.

¶ A murderer, whose sentence had been commuted, was being transferred from a local prison to a convict prison. As he waited on the platform of a railway station, in charge of two warders, a lady passed by. Looking at the convict with eyes of compassion filled with divine love, she said: 'God bless you.' Those three words broke the murderer down, and led him to Christ. Speaking of this incident to a friend of the writer's the convict said 'It was to me like a message from heaven.' That man to-day is living a splendid Christian life—won by three words from a passer-by![1]

3. But it is not enough to sympathize only with suffering, to spend one's time only in the hospitals of human souls; it is easier, far easier, to weep with those that weep than to rejoice with those that rejoice. Misery appeals to one as to a superior, the relief of distress is a definite action, bringing with it its definite feeling of satisfaction, and it is possible to cultivate a feeling of sympathy with woe that may leave the heart cold, even harsh, to all who are not in need of assistance for their distress. Our sympathy may be mixed with selfishness and may be one-sided; we are not to rest there. Our sympathy must lead to love towards all with whom we come in contact. Surely we must love genuinely those around us whom we have known so long; surely we must love them in both good report and ill. We must know how to meet their demands upon us, how to overlook their faults and overcome them by our love, how to recognize that many of what the world calls faults are necessary to each in the development of character: how restlessness is inseparable from high aspirations; how bitterness tends to go with intensity of character; how despondency is the reaction from excess of energy; how carelessness is often the result of an unsuspecting goodness of heart; how many faults, in short, are ill-regulated virtues; how different ages tend to bring different social virtues into prominence. This and much more Christian love instinctively supplies. Each makes allowances for the other without effort, without knowledge. Each rejoices in beholding the other's progress, delights to see the mind unfolding, the affections developing, the feelings becoming strong and deep. Each tries to remove every possible hindrance from the other's way, to secure him from every possible hurt.

4. But there are yet two admonitions of the Apostle which follow upon his other precepts. It might have seemed to us that he had done all that was necessary when he had bridged over thus far the believer's passage from the love of Christ within to the love of his brethren without. But there is yet more that can be done. The love of those around him, the genuine love founded upon a resignation of self and self-gratification, must not only simplify the Christian's life and increase his usefulness within his own immediate circle, but it must also leave its impress deep on his character, it must affect his entire being, it must give him a broad view of his general duties to all men, it must send him out into the world an ensample and a blessing to all.

So far we have considered the development of Christian love within the individual, but besides this, pitifulness and courtesy are to be the accompaniments of his daily life, and by means of them his Christian love is to shine forth to all who come in contact with him. Pitifulness is more subtle than sympathy; for sympathy is the capacity for entering into others' joys or sorrows, and feeling with them so as to halve the sorrow and double the

[1] *The Happy Christian*, 57.

joy; pitifulness is that deep-seated tenderness of heart and soul which draws to itself the weary and the heavy-laden, which commands the confidence of the broken-hearted. Pitifulness is the overflow of love, drawing all who need consolation and comfort to its waters, that there they may slake their thirsty souls.

¶ 'I remember,' one of the Sisters of the Mission writes, 'the first Sunday morning Mr. Collier came to preach at the Bridgewater Hall after my going there. He asked me how I was getting on. In telling him of the drinking among the women—a slum district was a new experience to me then—I was overwhelmed and the tears ran down my face. Putting his hand on my shoulder, he said: "Amy"—he always called us by name—"pray you may always keep that tender heart and never get hardened to the sin and need."'[1]

5. Finally, courtesy is the development of Christian love in the smallest detail of daily life and conduct. It is the perpetual recognition of our duties towards everyone we meet. It is the perpetual sense of the dignity of humanity, of the honour due to all God's creatures, of the infinite grandeur of every human soul. It is the entire absence of self-assertion or of a feeling of individual rights; it is what the Apostle meant by 'in honour preferring one another.' Courtesy is too often regarded as dealing with trifles, as being an artistic finish to the character, as requiring leisure for attention to the trivial details of life. Nothing could be more untrue. There is a spurious courtesy of grimace and gesture, as there is a counterfeit of every virtue; but the genuine courtesy or kindliness that springs from Christian love demands a forgetfulness of trifles, demands an eye fixed upon the goal. It is content, if only that may be reached, to make light of all the difficulties of the way. It requires no grand surroundings for its exercise. It may be exercised in any sphere of life, however humble. It may be met with in its most perfect form in the simplest peasant.

¶ One rainy day a group of clerks stood discussing baseball in one of New York's large department stores. A woman wet and bedraggled entered the store. The 'baseball fans' did not disband, but the poorest paid clerk of them all stepped up to the woman and courteously asked, 'What can I do for you?' She told him. He got the article promptly, laid it before her, and explained its merits smilingly. When the woman left she asked for his card. Later the firm received a letter from a woman ordering complete 'furnishings' for a great estate in Scotland. 'I want one of your men, Mr———,' she wrote, 'to supervise the furnishing personally.' The name she mentioned was that of the clerk who had been courteous. The head of the firm informed her that the clerk she had mentioned was the youngest and most inexperienced of them all, and suggested sending Mr———. 'I want this young man and no other,' wrote the woman; 'large orders impose their own conditions.' So our courteous young clerk was sent across the Atlantic to direct the furnishing of a great Scottish palace. His customer that rainy day had been Mrs. Andrew Carnegie. The estate was Skibo Castle.[1]

Sympathy.

I Pet. iii. 8.—'Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another' (RV 'Finally, be ye all likeminded, compassionate' [margin 'sympathetic']).

It is a curious fact that the noun 'sympathy' and the verb 'to sympathize' are not in the ordinary versions of our English Bible. To use the word 'sympathetic' here is thus a great gain, for it not only translates but transliterates, carrying over the sound as well as the sense of the original.

It is a worthy 'finally' to all that has gone before, and the only 'finally' that is adequate to cement life's scattered interests into a unity. An old violin makes sweeter music than a new one, and there is a reason for that. A violin is made of a large number of pieces of wood. When they are put together they are, as it were, strangers to one another. They are naturally somewhat stiff in their new-found

[1] G. Jackson, *Collier of Manchester*, 77.

[1] A. B. Webber.

relationships, as stiff as new acquaintances in human life. They do not thrill rightly to one another nor vibrate in perfect unity. That is a question of time. And as years and decades roll on, and the idiosyncracies of the separate pieces of wood get shaken out of them, and they get more accustomed to their common life in the frame of the violin, the harshnesses begin to fade away; the vibrations come into mutual sympathy; and the instrument gives at last of its best. So whether it be in the relationship of husband and wife, or any other of our close and constant fellowships, the perfect sympathy is the great 'finally': it is a climax and a growth: it requires the suns of many summers to ripen and mellow it. Only, as St. Peter would have us see, that is no reason why we should not do what we can to hasten the process, or why we should not welcome what God does to hasten it—He who draws us towards His great finalities gently and gradually as we are able to bear and to do.

There is some reason for a grave and deliberate cultivation of the grace of sympathy. For it is a curiously capricious element in life. We do not find it where we think we have most right to expect it. If there is one relationship of life where we should expect to find it in its utmost fullness, it is in the life of parent and child. Yet it is the tragedy of many a home that there is the physical relationship without the mental and moral sympathy. The sympathy has never been nourished and tended; it has died of sheer neglect. The children have grown out of sympathy with the beliefs and prejudices and standpoints of their parents: the parents have no sympathy with the interests, recreations or ideals of their children. That there is often such tragic failure of sympathy even in circumstances where its presence would be most natural—this is sufficient reason for St. Peter's careful and deliberate counsel, 'Be ye all like-minded, sympathetic.'

But how can we be fellow-workers with God in the development of this grace in ourselves?

1. We cannot do it without some self-knowledge. When Massillon, the great French orator, was asked where he got his marvellous knowledge of human nature, he said, 'By knowing myself.' There is a suggestive conjunction in St. Paul's letter to the Galatians (vi. 1, 2). In one verse he says, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' It is one of the finest counsels of sympathy ever uttered. But in the previous sentence occurs this phrase, 'Considering also thyself,' and the one thought is a preparation for the other. If we consider ourselves, we shall have learned, in part at least, how to consider our brother. If we know something about our own weaknesses, desires and needs, we shall be better able to estimate the weight of our brother's burden.

2. For a second element in the same education is the habit of a certain gracious imaginativeness—indeed a deliberate culture of the imagination is the way of thinking oneself into the place of others. If we did cultivate it, would the rudenesses be possible which so often embitter life? Would the people who need sympathy but who are not skilled in demanding it have to go so often without it? Would not sorrow be approached with a gentler pity and our whole handling of others be more tactful and gracious because we have thought ourselves into their places, and have put a little imagination into the working of the Golden Rule?

3. But, above all, our human sympathy needs to be sanctified and trained in the school of Christ. There is another familiar passage in the New Testament where the Greek version, though not the English, contains the very letters and sound of our word sympathy. 'We have not an high priest who cannot sympathize with our infirmities' (Heb. iv. 15). He sympathizes! And there are two great things in that one message. Here is the pattern sympathy: men saw it for a few brief years in this world, perfect in tenderness, exhaustless in helpfulness, absolute in self-forgetfulness; and now, raised to the heavenly places, it abides the same and shines like a star over our narrow and selfish lives, to remind them how

gracious and beautiful they may become. Here, too, is the fountain where our hearts, often too bare and dry of sympathy, replenish themselves in this needed grace. We crave to be made sympathetic, but it may be a serious and terrible gift to ask. The mantle which the ministrant souls of the bygone ages have worn may be all too heavy for us to wear. It may involve a drain and a strain of which from a distance we had no idea at all. So our sympathy, even with the best intentions, sometimes grows weary and fretful: we forget how to be 'tender-hearted, humble-minded.' When we feel like that, we are wise to treat the vast sympathy of Jesus as the fountain wherein we bathe to refresh our flagging sympathy and to make it once more like His own. And all our power to be sympathetic towards others is renewed by contact with Him who Himself sympathizes with our infirmities and who is able by His Spirit's working to write upon our hearts His new best name of Love.

¶ 'Be ye sympathetic.' Do men, even good men, often fail to rise to the height of this grace? Mark Rutherford discusses in one of his books the rarity of sympathy in modern life, and thinks it is caused by the decay of the old simple faith. Long ago, men believing alike could walk together as the disciples walked on the way to Emmaus: they could strengthen one another as Hopeful strengthened Christian amid the swelling floods. But nowadays each man is busy with his own problems: each is shifting for himself intellectually as well as materially: and we are isolated one from another. And he goes on: 'My poor reader-friend, how many times have you in this century, when the billows have gone over you, how many times have you felt the arm of man or woman under you raising you to see the Shining Ones and the glory that is inexpressible?' If this indictment is even partly true, the members of Christ in this world have need to renew their powers of sympathy by contact with their Head. But there is a yet more urgent need for all souls that seek sympathy for themselves to press close on their own behalf, even past His Church if need be, to the side of Jesus. Wounded souls and a wounded Saviour understand each other: in His glory there is nothing more glorious than His eternal sympathy.[1]

Dear Lord, I do so little share
The burdens others have to bear,
  Teach me to sympathize.
Oh, make me glad when they are glad,
Let me be sad when they are sad,
  And wipe their tearful eyes.

Then, I would know, when they are weak,
When to be silent—when to speak
  The very word they need.
Thou only can'st this wisdom lend,
Oh help me my unfailing Friend,
And light, and love, and patience send,
  O give the sower seed![2]

Kindness to Animals.

1 Pet. iii. 8.—'Be pitiful.'

Sir Edwin Arnold, in a most interesting essay on the question, 'Are Animals Moral?' says: 'All Christian peoples stand, for the most part, a sadly long way behind those of the East in their conduct to animals. Good Buddhists never intentionally take away life at all. The modern Hindoos of any good caste, borrowing from Buddha his noble regard for the right of everything to live, never touch meat as food, seldom even fish. . . . By a single decree of Mohammed the whole of Islam acts a thousand times more kindly to animals than Christendom.'

1. According to the letter of the New Testament this is mainly true, but according to the spirit of its teaching it is absolutely and altogether false. If you seek for positive and direct commands against cruelty you will not find them. He who said, 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' did not say, 'Be kind to, respect and reverence, all forms of life wherever you find them.' But we have something better, something infinitely higher, than such a command as that: we have a God-life lived in God's world under purely human condi-

[1] J. M. E. Ross.
[2] M. Hitchin-Kemp, *The Ideal of Sympathy*, 20.

tions; lived too, to show us how every son of man should live; lived to leave us an example that we should follow in His steps. Look at that life, then, not alone in its relation to man, but in its relation to the world which was the scene of its activities; look at it in its relation to every creature and thing which formed its environment, and see if you can find anything but love, and pity, and gentleness, and sympathy, and respect, and reverence for everything God has made. Can you conceive of the lowly One of Nazareth, as He went about His Father's business, dropping benedictions upon the sordid, sorrowing, suffering, sinful lives of men—can you conceive of Him as even participating in an act of unkindness, cruelty, or pain-giving to the very humblest of God's creatures? Did He not say that 'not a sparrow falleth on the ground without your Father'? Did He not unveil the world and all its phenomena as impregnated with the Divine Presence, as a display of the Divine wisdom and goodness? Did He not show how intimately God is connected with every form of life? Of the grass He said, God painted it; of the birds of the air, 'Your heavenly Father feedeth them.' We can think of Him as entering into the meaning and the mystery of the life and instincts and pleasures of the animal world; as seeing responsive elements existing between the Creator and the creature; as knowing how God takes in all life, and how in some way all life apprehends God.

Christianity means the copying of Christ, the reproduction of the tone, and temper, and emotions of His character in our character. If He were really born in us, and reproduced in the whole of humanity, how differently would the relations existing between man and the other creatures of God be recognized. How changed would man's conceptions be of his duty towards his neighbours, the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, as well as his neighbour man!

¶ Like her other benevolences, Mrs. Booth's kindness to animals took a practical turn. 'If I were you,' she would say to the donkey-boys at the seaside resorts, where in later years she went to lecture, 'I should like to feel, when I went to sleep at night, that I had done my very best for my donkey. I would like to know that I had been kind to it, and had given it the best food I could afford; in fact, that it had had as jolly a day as though I had been the donkey, and the donkey *me*.' And she would enforce the argument with a threepenny or a sixpenny bit, which helped to make it palatable.[1]

¶ A suburban lady writes of an incident seen in London the other day:

'I have an Irish lady staying with me, and she has been greatly impressed by the perpetual wonder of the London police as they stop the traffic in a moment by the lifting of a hand.

After a day's shopping in town she said to me: "I saw the most wonderful thing to-day. I was in a bus when suddenly it was stopped, and all the traffic was held up. We craned our necks to see what was keeping us, and then from the island in the middle of the street, where a policeman was standing, a mother cat dashed across to the pavement opposite *with a kitten in her mouth*.

When she was safely over, the policeman allowed the traffic to go on."'[2]

2. Think, too, of the elements of the Christian religion as they were propounded by the Apostles of Christ, and see how they touch not only every phase of human life in its relations with human life, but how they impregnate character with a spirit that touches all things with reverence, and outpours itself on all things in love. 'The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering'; has that any bearing upon conduct in its relation to other forms of life? 'Be pitiful,' says St. Peter. Did he mean pity only for human woes and weaknesses and follies and sins? Surely he meant for everything. The true Christ-man, in all his splendid, courageous, heroic character, is one who is ever kind, and to whom cruelty is unknown.

He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast;

[1] H. Begbie, *Life of William Booth*, i. 123.
[2] *The Children's Newspaper*, May 31, 1924.

He prayeth best who loveth best
Al things both great and small;
For the dear Lord who loveth us
He made and loveth all.

It is essentially the mission of the Christian pulpit to tell men that they have no right to inflict needless pain upon any creature that shares with man life derived from God; and we must not hesitate to tell them so in words that they cannot understand. We must tell Science that in experimenting upon animals for the benefit of mankind she must deal tenderly, humanely, reverently, with even the humblest life she touches. We must tell Society that to encourage the slaughter of millions of the songsters of the air to provide the table with unnecessary delicacies is an outrage to Christian sentiment, and that to murder birds of gay plumage to decorate the attire of fashionable ladies is a wanton insult to the Creator. We must see that nowhere shall cruelty be practised for the pleasure or gain of man. We must insist that where animals are killed for what man thinks to be necessary food, the process of killing shall be marked by all the kindness, care, and tenderness that is possible. Not to do this is not to fulfil one of the highest phases of our mission to the world.

¶ In all this matter, then, of the treatment of animals it comes to the definition of the words 'unnecessary suffering.' And I say this: All suffering that is inflicted merely for our pleasure, distraction, and even for our convenience and profit, as distinct from our preservation, is unnecessary and an abomination. And the fact that it is inflicted on creatures unable to raise hand to help themselves, or voice to tell us what they suffer, makes it ever the more abominable. Whether it be the destruction of mother-birds (with their whole families of nestlings) for the sake of the nuptial plumes to be worn in the hats and hair of human mothers, or the painful docking of the tails of horses, their sole weapon against the torment of stinging flies, for the sake of an ugly fashion; whether it be the treacherous sale of horses worn out in our service, the snaring of rabbits in needlessly cruel traps, the turning adrift of friendly but unwanted dogs and cats; whether it be the unnecessarily slow and painful slaughtering of animals for food, the wretched keeping in captivity of wild song-birds, the prisoning of eagles, hawks, and many other creatures that cannot bear confinement, in zoos and other places; whether it be any of these, or this sometimes distressing and always unnatural training of performing animals, in all suffering is inflicted for our pleasure, distraction, convenience or profit, and all of it is unnecessary, all against the conscience of the age. . . .

Nearly all the suffering we inflict, whether on human beings or on animals, comes from our not thinking. Many people distrust that practice. For all that, I venture to suggest that a little more thought will do no harm to any of us.

We pass this way but once, but once tread this world, and live in communion with these furred and feathered things, many of them beautiful, in a thousand ways so like ourselves, often friendly if we would let them be, and yet who, one and all, are so simple and helpless in the face of our force and ingenuity. Shall we, as we vanish, say: 'I have lived my life as a true lord of creation, taking toll from the captivities and sufferings of every creature that had not my strength and cunning!' Or shall we pass out with the thought: 'I wish I had not given needless pain to any living thing!'[1]

Good Manners.

1 Pet. iii. 8.—'Be courteous.'

So an Apostle recognizes the value of good manners; he knows there is such a thing as social life, which can be managed well or ill, and about which a Christian may rightly be exhorted by his pastors. It is but one word, 'Be courteous.' But at least it has been said. Manners, too, are a part, then, of Christianity; they are commended by the inspired writings of the Christian Church. And once they have been so commended we feel it is

[1] J. Galsworthy, *A Sheaf*, 61ff.

most right that they should be. For what are manners, we say, but one of the ways in which we deal with our neighbours, and what are good manners but a way of dealing with them so as to convince them and save them discomfort and pain; what in fact, is courtesy but one of the forms of unselfishness? Christianity teaches unselfishness as the beginning and end of duty—then, of course, it should teach good manners. No wonder an Apostle has said, 'Be courteous.'

We think of 'courtesy' more as a secular than as a Christian virtue, a grace of gentle birth and of high breeding rather than a grace of Christian living. But indeed no grace or even accomplishment, if it has a moral root, can stand outside the Christian profession. 'The Son of man came eating and drinking,' and it was part of His gospel to redeem the social as well as the moral life of man, so that St. Peter and St. Paul and St. James anticipate the fruits of chivalry and all else that is 'lovely and of good report,' and indeed penetrate far deeper into the heart of things than knights and fair ladies were able to do. The courtesy that restricts itself to court, or class, or station in life; the courtesy that is put on with our dress clothes and reserved for the drawing room or for 'company' is a trivial and shallow thing. The courtesy that restricts itself to set occasions and to favoured individuals is likely to become a tawdry, and often a rather tedious, ornament of life. But realized in its deeper meaning, and based upon love for Christ, it will become a fountain of happiness and influence, and the everyday expression of that 'love of the brethren' with which St. Peter here associates it.

Three great motives may and should prompt us in the regulation of manners.

1. First, good manners are the crowning beauty and glory of consecrated conduct. Many otherwise beautiful lives are not beautifully mannered—we have to learn to look behind external faultiness, and sometimes brusqueness, to perceive the real attractiveness of the personality. As Myers has said: 'Intellect and imagination may exist side by side with much moral meanness.' While superiority of heart is in itself a universal virtue, we are constrained to admit that piety and heroism may exist side by side with much external repulsiveness. When we do find this crowning beauty of conduct it reminds us of that supreme part of the high priest's dress known as the 'golden crown,' which was bound on the outside of the mitre with a ribbon of blue, and bore the inscription: 'Holiness to the Lord.' It was above and outside of all the rest of his robes and adornments; and a Christian disciple may be saintly, one of God's priests and kings, and yet lack this golden crown which represents the supreme hallowing even of the external conduct.

2. Again, such manners as we are commending represent the crowning result of a renewed and transfigured character. St. Paul writes to the Ephesians: 'Be renewed in the spirit of your mind'; not simply be renewed in your mind, or in your spirit, but 'in the spirit of your mind,' as though there were something more delicate than the mind itself, which, nevertheless, may qualify and characterize it. The transformation of manners seems to be the nearest approach to perfection of conduct. James Gilmour used to say that Christ was in the world to manifest God, and we to manifest Christ, and that the great thought of the mind and supreme object of the life should be to be as far as possible like Christ. In the New Testament this renewal of the spirit of the mind is referred to as the nearest approach to transfiguration. In Rom. xii. 1, 'Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind'—the word is, literally, 'transfigured,' and manifestly refers to that wonderful scene in the life of Christ when His whole Person became miraculously radiant, and even His raiment became translucent. This transfiguration was the highest manifestation of His glory ever seen on earth; and when the manners are completely transformed, it is the nearest approach to the believer's transfiguration.

In the Old Testament Daniel seems the man who, more than any other, shines with the radiance of holy manners. If the story contained in the first six chapters be carefully studied, it will be found that he presents the

rarest example of a faultless demeanour or behaviour, combining prudence, simplicity, sincerity, sympathy, humility, and all that pertains to the most winning exterior, so that even his foes had to acknowledge that they could find in him no fault. He is the only person in Scripture of whom this expression is used, except the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom Pilate said, 'I find no fault in this man.' If there be among New Testament saints any one that shines with this faultlessness of manners, it must be the Apostle John, who, after Pentecost, seems never to have betrayed any of his former impetuosity or resentment, but to have been an embodiment of love.

3. Again, such manners represent the crowning secret of winning influence over men—often unconscious, for, be it remembered, much of the highest power is not involuntarily or consciously exercised. Murray McCheyne, commenting upon Solomon's Song (iv. 16), beautifully says: 'Some believers are like a garden that has fruit trees, and they are useful; but we should also have spices in the garden, and so be attractive.' A well-known man quietly said to his irascible brother: 'You are to consider carefully which you would prefer, that it should be a trial or a privilege to live in the same house with you.' Modern science has discovered that there surrounds every man and woman a kind of personal atmosphere, which delicate instruments are able to detect; a kind of subtle magnetism exerted within a radius of about ten feet. This remarkable discovery serves to explain many otherwise mysterious facts.

¶ Everyone carries with him a certain moral atmosphere, which to a great extent determines the relations into which he comes with his fellow men. . . . Thus men are continually shedding off, as it were, some part of their personality into the society around them. And the tone of this society is the result, not so much of the deliberate attempt of the members of it to influence each other, as of the unconscious action and reaction of their characters . . . The whole weight of the evil that is in our society is dragging us down, and the whole force of the good that is in it is helping us up.[1]

Humility.

1 Pet. iii. 8.—'Be courteous' (RV 'humble-minded').

'HUMBLE-MINDED,' says the Revised Version. For the word which our translator read in his copy of the New Testament, and turned correctly enough into 'Be courteous,' is not the word which St. Peter actually wrote. The Greek word which St. Peter wrote means not 'courteous' but 'humble.' 'Be pitiful, be humble,' said the Apostle. The precept of courtesy has vanished, and behind it rises up, as in a dissolving view, the old familiar image of a more religious virtue—humility.

1. But courtesy and humility are not so far apart. There are two vices by which good manners are liable to be corrupted—one is pride, the other is insincerity.

(1) *Pride.*—How often have gentle manners been valued chiefly as a badge of good birth or high social position (though, indeed, wise observers know better, and find that manners are by no means the property of a particular class), and so have ministered only to vanity, served only as a reminder of the distance between the man who has them and those who have them less?

(2) *Insincerity.*—How many people learn and practise the code of good social conduct not at all for the true reason of its existence, namely, regard for the good of others, but simply because it is the usual thing, the thing expected of them, and the lack of which would be noticed; or worse, because good breeding is part of the effectiveness and the grace by which they mean to get on in life? That kind of mannerliness is an insincerity; it turns the civilities you offer a neighbour into an irony, perhaps a mock, a concealed insult.

2. Now, it must be clear that the cure of these two vices is humility. For what is humility? So far as practised towards our

[1] Edward Caird.

fellow-men, it is simply a particular way of being unselfish; it is unselfishness towards others in regard to honour and dishonour. The humble man is he who acts as St. Paul bids: 'in honour preferring one another.' Well then, plainly it is the humble-hearted man who will purge his manners from pride, from the 'half disdain hid under grace,' which a poet notes as symptom of a 'smaller time.' And it is the humble-hearted whose mannerliness will be the truest, the most sincere. For it is he who will show courtesies, not in order that he may be called a gentleman, but in order that he may be truly gentle towards the comfort and the ease and the self-respect of others, be they the highest or the lowest.

¶ A few weeks ago, I found myself once again, after an interval of many years, in the great space before St. Peter's, and wondered what it was in that mighty basilica which inspired emotions very different from those with which the eye always rests on our own golden cross, as it shines over city and river. Then under the scorching heat I came up to the obelisk, brought by Caligula to Rome, and armed by Pope Sixtus V. with a ten years' indulgence for all who should repeat a Paternoster and adore the Cross by which it is now crowned. I read the legend at its base, and I understood. '*Ecce crux Domini*'—so it runs—'*fugite adversae partes. Vicit Leo de tribu Juda.*' 'Behold the Cross of the Lord. Let all them that hate it flee before it. The Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed.' But this is pride and not piety. The spirit of such an inscription belongs to the crusader and not the missionary, to Constantine and not to Christ. The Lamb conquers, not when He slays His enemies and scatters the ungodly, but when He loves the world and draws all men to Himself. Humility is nothing less than God's infinite power of redemption. It is the Divine courtesy which can transform every man into a 'verray parfit gentil knyght,' like the heavenly Father Himself. And among all the treasures of the heavenly garden none has a higher excellence.[1]

Amongst them all growes not a fairer flowre.
Then is the bloosme of comely courtesie;
Which though it on a lonely stalke doe bowre,
Yet brancheth forth in brave nobilitie,
And spreads itself through all civilitie.

[1] J. G. Simpson.

COURTESY.

1 Pet. iii. 8.—'Be courteous.'
1 Cor. xv. 33.—'Good manners.'
1 Cor. xiii. 2-5.—'If I have not love I am nothing . . . Love does not behave itself unseemly.'
Ruth ii. 13.—'Thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid.'
Philem. 8, 9.—'Though I have all boldness to enjoin thee . . . yet . . . I rather beseech.'
1 Pet. ii. 23.—'Who when he was reviled, reviled not again.'
Prov. xi. 16-17.—'A gracious woman retaineth honour. A merciful man doeth good to his own soul.'

THE most advanced modern thought is too deeply grounded on psychology to think lightly of courtesy, but at the beginning of the present century and in the end of the last there was a feeling among many current thinkers that courtesy and sincerity were in some way incompatible—that an honest man necessarily had rather bad manners. Nowadays students of ethics know better; but the plain man, who is naturally a little behind the specialists, still clings to the old idea that courtesy is at most a pleasant triviality, best left to women and the frivolous.

Now, as Mr. Chesterton points out in his delightful *Orthodoxy*, we are discovering in our day that a great many of our newest discoveries in mental science—that is to say, in truth about the mind or non-material part of

man—are not new at all, but were anticipated about two thousand years or more ago by the writers of the Bible. The Bible has not very much to say about courtesy in itself: but its whole ethical teaching inculcates it continually, from the Mosaic Law to the Sermon on the Mount or the Epistles of the three great teaching Apostles, Peter, Paul and John. Let us look then, first of all, at one or two of the great Bible figures in whom this virtue is shown most clearly, and then let us see what is the Christian's duty with regard to it, and what may be the consequences of fulfilling that duty.

I.

COURTEOUS MEN IN THE BIBLE.

As we should expect from a literature produced by a great Oriental civilization, and having for part of its subject-matter the acts of some of the finest souls who ever lived, the Bible is full of great examples of high courtesy.

1. *Boaz.*—How fine the courtesy of Boaz was!—not only towards Ruth at their first interview, as she herself recognized when she said, 'Thou hast comforted me, for that thou hast spoken kindly unto thine handmaid,' but also in his charming greeting to his own servants in the barley-field: 'The Lord be with you.' We see the same characteristic again in the wonderful, almost womanly, tenderness and consideration (so unexpected in one who appears to have been a middle-aged bachelor) in regard to all the arrangements which he made for the comfort of Ruth during her gleaning in his field: 'Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither pass from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens.

Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn . . .

And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not.

And also pull out some for her from the bundles, and leave it, and let her glean, and rebuke her not.'

The most striking feature in this kindness of Boaz is the apparently trivial nature of the things in which it showed itself. It was not in large donations; it was not in heroic sacrifices. It was in things so small as to seem almost unworthy of record. Strange though it may sound to say so, it is perhaps this seeming triviality of sphere that brings Boaz nearest to the Christian standard. According to that standard it is the smallest sphere that most conclusively proves a man: 'He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much.' We often hear the phrase, 'a Christian gentleman.' What is a Christian gentleman? Wherein does a gentleman of the School of Christ differ from a gentleman of the mere worldly school? One need have no hesitation in saying that the difference lies in their comparative power of descending into minute things. It is the difference between law and grace. There is a law of etiquette as well as a law of Moses—a social code which the man of the world must not transgress. But he may refuse to transgress this code, and still be outside the Christian standard. The Christian standard goes down *below* law. It does more than the book of etiquette commands, more than is taught in the world's school. The Christian gentleman, as much as the Christian saint, is justified by grace—not law. He would not be satisfied with keeping any set of social commandments. His authority is derived not from Sinai, but from Calvary—not from any conventional code, but from the dictates of the individual heart.

2. *Paul.*—In the Apostle Paul we may study Christian courtesy both in *precept* and in *practice*.

(1) There are three *precepts* uttered casually in his letters which embody the leading principles of courtesy as the art of Christian conduct in social life. In the first he indicates that love is to courtesy what the soul is to the body. 'Let love be without hypocrisy. . . .

In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honour preferring one another.' Courtesy is not merely to be a mask in which we play a part prescribed to us on the social stage. Courtesy is to be the language of love in speech and gesture and deed among those who, as the members of the same family, cherish towards one another the tender family affection which knows no posturing of hypocrisy. When such love is in the heart there is that courtesy which is never greedy of honour, but anticipates the getting of honour by the giving of it. 'In honour preferring one another.' Christian courtesy is not affectation but affection.

The second indicates the method by which courtesy may be cultivated: 'In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.' This is the mental attitude which love assumes in the cultivation of courtesy—humility and sympathy. We *know* the worst of ourselves; we can only *suspect* the worst of others. We have always reason to respect others, for we can always believe them to be better than we are, seeing we cannot know them to be worse. We can esteem the ideal in them to be better than the real in ourselves. But, whilst courtesy is based on this lowliness of mind, it grows through sympathy. When we give up our self-seeking and self-conceit, and project ourselves into the feelings and interests of others, our manner towards them becomes tender and delicate, as of those who are dealing with their own flesh and blood. Christian courtesy is thus not the gracious condescension of a superior to an inferior, or the patronizing interestedness of a stranger in a stranger's affairs; that is only the mask of courtesy. The courtesy of the Christian is the homage of the heart to the ideal of humanity in our neighbour, and our identification with his feelings and interests so as to make that ideal real for him and us alike.

The third of these precepts relates to courtesy in one of its principal manifestations—speech. 'Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.' Courtesy is the flavour of our personality which we add to our conversation. All truth of soul is enhanced and commended by beauty of expression. A mere abstraction admits of no such embellishment. We cannot give a personal relish to a proposition of Euclid. But in all social intercourse the tone of the voice, the gesture of the body, the expression of the eye, as well as the little grace notes of our speech, may so stimulate the appetite of the hearer as to make the truth we utter more palatable and more easily assimilated. The same ingredients of truth, without the salt of courtesy, are only good victuals spoiled in the cooking and serving. The dishes and decorations and condiments on the table do not make a dinner, but without them a dinner is not so well relished. We are so constituted that the eye has to be fed as well as the palate. So speech is commended to the mind by those little delicacies and adornments of courtesy without which it is stale and insipid.

(2) The commentary on Paul's precepts of courtesy is to be found in his *practice*. We may therefore select some typical examples.

Perhaps there is no better example of Christian courtesy in the difficult art of fault-finding than Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians. The Corinthian Church had developed many ugly characteristics which marred the fine promise of their faith and usefulness. Paul had to direct attention to these. He begins with a frank appreciation of all that is good in the Corinthian converts. He tells them that he is always thanking God for the grace which is given them, for they are enriched in everything by Christ—in all utterance and in all knowledge: he is silent about their love. He rejoices that the testimony of Christ is confirmed in them, so that they 'come behind in no gift'; and, spite of all their shortcomings, he expresses the belief that, being called into the fellowship of God's Son, they shall be 'blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.' It is only after this friendly beginning that he proceeds to rehearse the sad tale of their failings. We have only to read the letters themselves to understand how the salt of courtesy judiciously intermixed with unpalatable truth prevented the correspondence

from becoming offensive to the Corinthian mind.

As an example of Paul's courtesy before his superiors in social rank, we may select his appearance before Agrippa. He is not to be outstripped by Festus, who addresses Agrippa as King, though he was not much more than a king in name. Paul remembers the king and forgets the man, compliments Agrippa on his knowledge as being 'expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews,' and considers himself fortunate in pleading before one who had such understanding of the circumstances of his case. He then tells the stirring story of his conversion, of his labours, and of the sufferings of Christ in which he participates. Festus accuses him of madness, but Paul turns to Agrippa with a benignant courtesy, which almost won the king: 'The king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely.' 'King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?' But at once he credits his royal listener with a faith which his question seems to doubt: 'I know that thou believest'; and, having elicited the sneer that Paul was trying to make a Christian of him on very slender grounds, the Apostle presses home the courteous and delicate appeal, not only to the king, as if he needed it more than others, but to the whole Court—a touch of delicacy which took off the personality of the reference: 'I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.' Paul had learned his courtesy in the Court of another King.

But the courtesy of a man shows itself best in the small delicacies of speech—omissions, suppressions, additions, turns and refinements of phrases, when there is no special occasion demanding carefully measured language. Little off-hand courtesies and compliments indicate the good breeding of a man. We see this feature of Paul's courtesy especially in the salutations of his letters. Note, for instance, how he begins his Epistle to the Philippians: 'Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi.' How delicately the veteran honours Timothy, his young disciple, by bracketing his name with his own! How quietly he suppresses his usual and higher title of Apostle, which Timothy could not share! What an encouragement to a youth to be placed side by side on an equality with one who was honoured of all the churches! He begins similarly both his Epistles to the Thessalonians. There he brackets the names of Silas and Timothy with his own. These two, along with himself, had been instrumental in founding the Church by their labours, and, as they had shared the work, Paul pays them the compliment of associating them with himself in his greetings and rejoicings when writing to the converts in Thessalonica.

The finest example of Paul's courtesy known is the Epistle to Philemon, the only one of Paul's personal and private letters which has been preserved. The letter displays the grace of his mind as well as of his pen—so nimble in its movements, so subtle in its suggestiveness, so refined in its feeling, so persuasive in its pleading. He is begging a favour for a poor, runaway, thievish slave; an insignificant subject, perhaps, but Paul lovingly lavishes upon it all the wealth of his grace of mind and heart, just as a great master may leave the heroic marble to devote his genius to the carving of a cameo. From this brief Epistle we may learn the art of Christian letter-writing. The whole letter is a marvel of grace and tenderness, of humour and earnestness, of dignity and condescension, of refinement and strength, such as could be written only by one in whose nature these same qualities were so abundant as to overflow without strain or effort on what might seem to be only a trivial occasion.

3. *The Man Christ Jesus.*—Our Lord was what Malory called Him—'the greatest gentleman of the world' (one sees this quality very clearly in Leonardo da Vinci's marvellous *Face of Christ*, by the way). Now, a gentleman is always courteous. Not only is courtesy necessarily included in His gentleness and in His freedom from everything boisterous in address, but the very phraseology and motive of courteousness are attributed to Him. On one occasion, for instance, He directed tribute

to be levied in order to avoid giving offence. To His personal example we add the expression of His sentiments. When He saw in one place the indications of that pride, that love of personal distinction, which is opposed to courteousness, He rebuked it, and showed how by the mere manner of mingling in a company we should manifest a delicate respect to others and a preference of them to ourselves; adding, too, that this was even the most likely plan of attaining ultimate honour. At another place He rebuked Simon who had received Him into his house and so far displayed his friendship, but who had omitted those polite and customary attentions of water for the feet, and ointment for the head, which in Eastern countries it was usual to pay. This deficiency in courtesy our Lord observed, and took occasion to mention, teaching us that it is not enough to pretend to be kind to others unless we accompany it with all those small but pleasant attentions which custom recognizes and expects.

II.

THE CHRISTIAN AND COURTESY.

1. If we are Christians we *must* be courteous. It is part of our absolute duty, and in so far as we neglect it we fall short of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. There is, it is true, a class of people who are honest and well meaning, but who are persistently discourteous and are not ashamed. There is, for instance, the man who is credited with what is called a bluff, blunt manner, and who credits himself with a special quality of downrightness and straightforwardness. He considers it best to say what he thinks, and boasts that he never minces his words. And people make all kinds of excuses for him, and rather talk as if he were a very fine fellow, beside whom civil-spoken persons are little better than hypocrites. As a matter of fact, no one can calculate the pain this outspoken gentleman causes in a single day, both in his family and outside. Nor can one readily understand why he is praised, or even tolerated, and why he is not sharply dealt with as an offender against the social peace. There is nothing unmanly in courtesy. The strongest and bravest men are generally the mildest and gentlest. Indeed, courtesy is often a sign of strength, because it implies and involves a certain self-repression. The weak and pompous man fears to be courteous lest he should compromise his own small dignity; but he who is truly strong is far above any such dread. Courtesy is not merely a trivial and ornamental attribute, fit only for ladies' bowers:

> Manners are not idle, but the fruit
> Of loyal nature and of noble mind.

Its root is in the faculty of sympathy. The unsympathetic man is never truly courteous, because he is by the very law of his nature careless of the feelings of others.

This last point explains in some measure why we can regard it as part of our religious duty. It is true, of course, that courtesy is not in itself religion, but yet the same thing may be said of it that may be said of other virtues universally acknowledged to be of religious importance. For example, honesty is not religion, but a religious man should be honest, and that because he *is* a religious man, and as a result of his religious principles and convictions. Veracity is not religion, but a religious man should be veracious. So neither is courtesy religion, but a religious man should be courteous. It is part of his duty, as a man who professes to be under the golden rule.

¶ In all ages noble and religious men have testified to the necessity of courtesy. In the 12th century St. Francis says, 'Courtesy is one of the properties of God, who gives His sun and rain to the just and the unjust by courtesy; and courtesy is the sister of charity, by which hatred is extinguished and love is cherished.'[1] In the 14th, Dante declares, 'Nothing becomes a lady better than courtesy.'[2] Matthew Henry, the courtly 17th century divine, and William Penn, the founder of Quakerism with its hatred of form, are in one key: 'Sanctified civility is a great orna-

[1] St. Francis of Assisi, in *I Fiorituri di San Francisco.*

[2] Dante Alighieri, *Il Convivio*, ii. 2, 11.

ment to Christianity. It was a saying my father often used—Religion does not destroy good manners; it destroys not civility but sanctifies it.'[1] 'Religion in the heart leads into this true civility, teaching men and women to be mild and courteous in their behaviour—an accomplishment worthy indeed of praise.'[2] Even in the cold days of the 18th century Burke can testify that, 'Nothing is more certain than that our manners, our civilisation, and all the good things connected with civilisation have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles, and were indeed the result of both combined; I mean the spirit of a gentleman and the spirit of religion'; and the 19th century story of the Duke of Wellington's deathbed shows that it is to be found hand in hand with the sternest exercise of discipline and autocratic power. It is told of him that, as he lay a-dying, his servant poured out some tea in a saucer, and asked the duke if he would have it. 'Yes, *if you please*,' was the reply from one who had commanded the greatest armies in Europe, and who was not accustomed to waste his words. Even on his death-bed, when speech became difficult, he did not forget that he was a gentleman in the highest sense, and that a gentleman is nothing if he is not courteous.

¶ Seeing Bishop Wilberforce look so pale and worn, I asked him why he did not keep a secretary. He said that it would be certainly a great relief to do so, but then so many people would be disappointed. 'For instance,' he remarked, 'a clergyman at Huddersfield writes to ask me, at Cuddesdon, to go to the North to preach on some special occasion. Of course I cannot comply with his wish. But I write a refusal myself with a few kind words, which makes it less annoying, whereas my secretary would say it was "impossible," and the poor man would feel that he had made a mistake.' This was the kind feeling which, expressed in nearly these words, made the Bishop a slave to his desk and often hindered his rest.[3]

[1] Matthew Henry, *Life of Master Philip Henry.*

[2] William Penn, 'Letter to his wife.'

[3] *Life of the Right Reverend Samuel Wilberforce, D.D.*, iii. 409.

¶ Good manners are morals touched with imagination.[1]

2. If we are Christians we shall *always* be courteous. Courtesy is not a virtue that is to be used only occasionally. Kipling says of the jungle-boy Mowgli, 'He carried his manners with his knife, and that never left him.' An average Christian in a civilized country has not the same need of the knife, but he has an even greater need of the manners. Courtesy is for all classes of society. It is likewise for every relative position.

(1) We ought to show it *towards the members of our own family*, as well as towards strangers. People are to be met with who are civil and polite among their equals in public, because they know that their equals will not tolerate anything else, but who are overbearing and tyrannical in their own houses, or, if not overbearing and tyrannical, discourteous and disagreeable. Certainly in intimate private life our intercourse should be, not stiff and formal, but free and unreserved. But surely it might be free without rudeness, and unreserved without coarseness. Surely we might be natural without being rough or harsh. Nor only might we be so, but, in proportion as our nature is sanctified and refined, we shall certainly become so more and more.

(2) We should likewise show courtesy and consideration *towards our inferiors*. It is true that people should keep their own place; and their humbler brethren will never wish them to descend out of it; but there is a way of keeping our place without imposing humiliation on our neighbours, and a man does not descend out of his proper sphere by speaking to his less exalted brother or sister as to a fellow-creature.

¶ 'As the sword of the best-tempered metal,' says Fuller, 'is most flexible: so the truly generous are most pliant and courteous in their behaviour to their inferiors.' This is an infallible test of gentlehood.

¶ Sidney Herbert could effectually repel really arrogant presumption, when occasion required it; but with those who were only unconventional and ignorant, not intention-

[1] L. P. Jacks, *From the Human End.*

ally offensive, he never allowed himself to betray by word, look, or gesture that their manners were not those of the best society, or their knowledge of the world inferior to his own.[1]

(3) We should show it *towards our superiors.* In these days it would seem to be thought by many that to show respect and deference to their superiors in worldly position implies a certain unmanly cringing; and, accordingly, they rather affect a freedom, and even bluntness of speech, verging upon incivility. But surely it is not requisite in order to save one's self-respect that one should withhold from others the consideration to which they are entitled. Surely roughness of speech and rudeness of manners are not the necessary marks of an independent spirit; and surely one can bow to worth, and even to station, without falling in the dust, or stooping in the smallest degree beneath what becomes a man.

(4) We should show it *towards the disabled.* From recent observation it would not be altogether superfluous to mention the duty of courtesy towards those physically defective in any way, of whom our generation has so many. Few people will be willingly *unkind* to anyone who is crippled, but discourtesy—staring or calling attention to the defect—can sting as badly. Even help may be given in a way to make the person helped wish it had not been bestowed.

¶ Scott's paralysis, in his later years, somewhat affected his faculty of speech. He would begin a story as gaily as ever, and go on, in spite of the hesitation in his speech, to tell it with highly picturesque effect—but before he reached the point, it would seem as if some internal spring had given way—he paused, and gazed round him with the blank anxiety of look that a blind man has when he has dropped his staff. Unthinking friends sometimes pained him sadly by giving him the catch-word abruptly. I noticed the delicacy of Miss Ferrier on such occasions. Her sight was bad, and she took care not to use her glasses when he was speaking; and she affected to be also troubled with deafness, and would say—'Well, I am getting as dull as a post; I have not heard a word since you said so and so'—being sure to mention a circumstance behind that at which he had really halted.[1]

(5) We should show it *towards those who* may possibly offend, but who really *mean well and kindly.* We subjoin two fine examples in which this duty was recognized and acted upon at the risk—even in one case the loss—of life. Gross minds may think it foolish at such a cost, but one imagines that Christ thought otherwise when a great soldier laid down his life rather than offend 'one of these little ones.' It may have been folly, but it was the kind of folly that stirs to noble issues.

¶ Sir Stanley Maude died a victim of the inbred courtesy of his fine character. I heard the story the other day from a member of his staff. He visited a plague-stricken area at the invitation of its inhabitants. They were anxious to give him a welcome for the many kindnesses which he had displayed, and they gave him a great welcome. They offered him a small act of hospitality, and although he so well knew the peril that he had actually forbidden any soldier in his escort to eat or drink while on that visit, he himself ran the risk rather than hurt the susceptibilities of a people who were anxious to give him a welcome. There was cholera in the cup, and he died in a few days. He will always be remembered as one of the great figures of this war, not merely for what he achieved, but for what he was. His name will always be cherished by the inhabitants of that land as that of the gentlest conqueror who ever entered the gates of Baghdad.[2]

¶ In an Indian Hospital, the inspecting officer, who was deservedly beloved for his deep interest in the people, and for the courage and devotion with which he fought the terrible battle he had to fight against the plague, was passing through a ward in which some plague patients were lying in more or less serious condition. One of these was requested by the chief promoter of the institution to place a garland of flowers round the neck of

[1] Lord Stanmore, *Sidney Herbert: A Memoir*, i. 92.

[1] J. G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, x. 68.

[2] *The Times*, March 5, 1918.

the inspecting officer [a mark of honour common in India]. The patient rose from his bed and, standing beside it, placed the garland as requested. The inspecting officer, with surely a reckless courage, bowed his head and received it.[1]

(6) But more than this, we should show it *towards God*. In the highest of all possible spheres good manners ripen into reverence. The man who is deferential towards his fellows will be reverential towards God. Reverence is the noblest form of deference. The spirit of both is the same; they differ only in degree. The same motive, only far higher, which incites you to raise your hat to your fellow-creature, incites you also to bend your knee before the Almighty Creator. That which would be a sign of ill-breeding in a palace is a sign of irreverence in church. Irreverence is the worst form of rudeness. Worship is the highest act of courtesy. The most finished Christian gentleman is the mostly lowly Christian worshipper.

III.

COURTESY AND THE CHRISTIAN.

We have studied in the last section the Christian duty with regard to courtesy. Let us look now at the effect on the Christian of its practice. That it *has* an effect was patent many years before Christianity to the wise man who wrote in Proverbs: 'A gracious woman retaineth honour. The merciful man doeth good to his own soul.'

'Merciful' here means not merely to show mercy when one has it in one's power to injure another. The word in older English meant, like the Hebrew word it translates, the attitude of mind that makes for 'mercy' in these circumstances, and in others expresses itself by goodness and consideration towards those with whom we come in contact. 'Gracious' to many people nowadays would seem to have lost some of its old noble significance and to carry a slight taint of condescension and patronage. But in its true meaning it is the same as the French *gracieux*, which is used to describe people who possess charm of manner, dignity and courtesy. The Hebrew word which it translates comes from a noun with precisely the same meaning as our word courtesy in its widest and highest sense. The gracious woman and the merciful man are consistently courteous people. Therefore 'they retain honour' —other people respect them and do good to them—and, further, they do good *to themselves*, to 'their own souls.'

1. *The courteous man 'retaineth honour.'*—By our manners people form an opinion of us—and not unjustly. 'Good manners come from a good heart.' There may be good manners without a good heart, but a good heart generally flows forth in good manners. 'There is a wonderful expressiveness in the human body.' It is impossible to conceal ourselves for ever from the scrutiny of the world. We may put a bridle on our lips, and set unsleeping sentinels over our actions. But silence is a poor and transparent mask. Should you never speak a single syllable, yet you are certain in some way to betray yourself. 'Wise men read very sharply all your private history in your look and gait and behaviour.' A man walks across a field, and his manner of walking is an indication of his character. He selects a suit, and his selection is a sort of window, through which the world gazes into the sanctuary of his soul. 'Every spirit makes its house, and we can give a shrewd guess from the house to the inhabitant.' Our tastes are the public and unavoidable expression of our affections and thoughts. There is no use in attempting to conceal ourselves. The effort of concealment is often but a grotesque form of exposure. When we open our mouths, or shake hands, or choose a coat, or raise our hat, or take a seat, or enter a room, we announce by our manner of doing these things of what sort and class we are. 'Manners are thought entering hands and feet, controlling movements of the body, speech, and behaviour.' Out of the heart of man proceed his manners, for the secret of fine manners is fine feeling, and manners are the reflection of the man.

An old Spanish philosopher says: 'Acquire

[1] A. H. L. Fraser, *Among Indian Rajahs and Ryots*, 345.

the reputation of courtesy; for it is enough to make you liked. Politeness is the main ingredient of culture—a kind of witchery that wins the regard of all, as surely as discourtesy gains their disfavour and opposition. It costs little and helps much: everyone is honoured who gives honour. Politeness and honour have this advantage, that they remain with him who displays them to others.'[1]

Further than this, however, if good manners are of service to us in our own affairs they are of even more importance when we try to advance some greater cause. In religious matters, for instance, good manners are of great moment. Religion requires for its dissemination every species of right and available influence. There are few influences so strong and subtle as the influence of manners. 'Their power is incessant. No man can resist their authority.' Manners make no noise, but they are very persuasive. They carry on their quiet missionary work from hour to hour imperceptibly, yet invincibly. Not only by our actions, but by our manners, we may commend our Christian profession to the world. Faith is foolish when it ignores culture. Good Christian manners are a splendid auxiliary to good Christian doctrine.

¶ One yellow stain ruins a marble, one black spot in the ceiling ruins the fresco, and one great fault, like the absence of courtesy, can injure character, threaten prosperity, and halve one's influence and success.[2]

¶ There is nothing comparable for moral force to the charm of truly noble manners.[3]

2. *The courteous man 'doeth good to his own soul.'*—For the most part, deportment exercises a profound influence upon principle, and good manners are conducive to good morals. To learn to act like a gentleman is a long step to becoming a gentleman at heart. The man who assumes a coarse brusqueness, and talks in loud tones, and behaves with elbowing rudeness, in order to convince you that he 'is genuine,' and that 'there is no nonsense about him,' is a hollow and conceited man. His manners both betray and mar him. None but common men are content with common manners, either in others or in themselves.

Courtesy not only proceeds from the possession of the Christian graces; it is a powerful help in gaining them. For instance, by acting kindly towards other people we help ourselves to feel kindly towards them. Sometimes the very fact of saying the pleasing thing will aid the speaker to acquire a real kindly feeling. No one likes to think himself insincere; and the habit of saying pleasant things will therefore foster the spirit of which they ought to be the true expression. Still more, courtesy teaches a self-control that may have far-reaching results for the personality. It is partly an inheritance, but more largely a discipline. The undisciplined are almost necessarily discourteous. Waywardness engenders poisons in the heart which taint and cripple manners. An untrained and ill-humoured child develops into an awkward and ill-mannered man. Also, consistent courtesy makes those who perceive it ashamed of their own lower standards, and one of those who perceive it is surely the man who voluntarily exercises it. So his lower self is ashamed of itself, and submits to the higher and truer.

'The conclusion of the whole matter' would seem to be that he who would be the servant of Christ and the friend of the Son of Man, who 'came not to be ministered unto, but to minister', must be courteous to all men: and conversely, he who is courteous *to all men at all times* is thereby serving Christ; and who serves Christ does to himself the best of service.

Of Courtesy it is much less
Than Courage of Heart or Holiness,
Yet in my Walks it seems to me
That the Grace of God is in Courtesy.

On Monks I did in Storrington fall,
They took me straight into their Hall;
I saw Three Pictures on a wall,
And Courtesy was in them all.

The first the Annunciation;
The second the Visitation;

[1] Balthasar Gracian, in *The Art of Worldly Wisdom*.
[2] N. D. Hillis, *The Contagion of Character*, 188.
[3] Coventry Patmore.

The third the Consolation,
Of God that was Our Lady's Son.

The first was of Saint Gabriel;
On Wings a-flame from Heaven he fell;
And as he went upon one knee
He shone with Heavenly Courtesy.

Our Lady out of Nazareth rode—
It was her month of heavy load;
Yet was Her face both great and kind,
For Courtesy was in Her Mind.

The third, it was our Little Lord,
Whom all the Kings in arms adored;
He was so small you could not see
His large intent of Courtesy.

Our Lord, that was Our Lady's Son,
Go bless you, People, one by one;
My Rhyme is written, my work is done.[1]

The Blessing.

1 Pet. iii. 9.—'Hereunto were ye called, that ye should inherit a blessing.'

In one of his booklets Evan H. Hopkins enumerates five ingredients in 'the Blessing.' They are these:

1. *It is a condition of soul-harmony with God.*—You are Christians; but is there no matter of controversy between your soul and God? A very little thing it may be; but you have not yielded your will about it. God has put His finger upon it, and it has given you a struggle. Perhaps you call this spiritual conflict. Is it not really spiritual rebellion?

2. *It is a condition of spiritual equipment.*—You are an instrument. The Master wants to put His hand upon you. Are you ready? Are you fit? I see a carpenter going into his shop; he has a beautiful piece of mechanism to do, and his whole soul is fixed upon doing his work well. He takes up a chisel, but there is no edge on it, and at once he lays it aside and takes up another. Why is the chisel not used? It is there to be used. Because it is not fit for the master's use.

3. *It is a state of preparedness for trial and suffering.*—You say, I was so put out this morning; I was taken unawares. Then you were not in the blessing, evidently. You say you understand all about it, and that you received it so many weeks ago, or only yesterday. That may be, but you have not been abiding in it. It has to be maintained moment by moment.

4. *It means readiness for conflict.*—What I am privileged to see is Christ getting the victorious position for me, and I am to occupy it by faith. Then I am strong; then I am a Christ-enclosed man; my feet are firmly planted down.

5. *It is a condition of spiritual intelligence.*—You are quick to detect the will of God. You are quick to hear the voice of God. You are ready to obey promptly, without asking questions.

The Happy Life.

1 Pet. iii. 10.—'He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him eschew evil and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.'

It is sometimes said of the Christian religion that it lays too much stress on the next world; that its doctrine of immortality tends to dwarf this present life, to turn men's thoughts too exclusively to the future, and away from the everyday duties that lie under their hands, which to be done well require an undivided attention. It might be a sufficient answer to this to point to the Apostles, and to show that they thought deeply and often of the next world; that they looked for the second coming of Christ even in their own day; that their chief solace and support in affliction was the faith that the sufferings of this present time were not worthy to be compared with the glory which should be revealed; that all this hastening towards a better world did not diminish one iota of their interest in things present; but that, on the contrary they laboured more abundantly for this very reason—that when their Master came He might receive

[1] Hilaire Belloc.

His own with usury, and they might earn His approbation.

But there is another reply to this objection still more decisive. It is to be found in those passages of Scripture which speak of the value of this present life, and the duty of making the best of it. The New Testament never teaches that the shortness of man's earthly life, in view of an immortality to come, should make him careless of this present world. If, on the one hand, the Epistles warn us 'not to set our affections on things on the earth,' to remember that 'our rest is not here' that 'our life is even a vapour that appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away', they teach us, on the other hand, to 'be not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' They continually remind us that our life here is a preparation for the life hereafter, and that 'he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully'; that 'our works do follow us.' And in the passage before us the Apostle, far from treating the love of this present world and the desire to see good days therein as something unworthy of the ambition of an heir of immortality, lays down some rules whereby this love can be most easily attained; whereby this present world can be made the most of and most thoroughly enjoyed. The rules he gives are taken from the Old Testament; for St. Peter, like his Master, was a close student of the Scriptures, and was able to draw from thence what was germane to his purpose. Twice already in the previous chapter of this Epistle he has quoted from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, and now he finds in the thirty-fourth Psalm the very words which suit his purpose, and he endorses with his apostolic authority the rules laid down by the Psalmist for the living of a happy life.

1. The first rule is this: 'Refrain thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile.' It may be that, as St. Peter penned these words, he remembered his denial of his Master. He had learnt then how the tongue that speaketh falsely can take all the joy out of life. He could never forget those hours beneath the stars when the thought of what he had said made him weep bitterly. David, attacked by the virulent tongue of his enemies, cried out in his pain, 'Adders' poison is under their lips'; 'They have whet their tongue like a sword; they shoot out their arrows, even bitter words.' But the injury which the evil or false tongue does to others is not so great as that which it brings on its possessor. His own tongue makes him fall. In the enemies that he makes, in the friends that he loses, in the habits that he fosters, in the remembrances that he stores up, the man reaps for himself a far sorer punishment than any that he brings on others. We put a bit in the horse's mouth, says St. James, whereby we turn about his whole body; and so the tongue in our mouths can turn about our whole life—turn it into the sunshine of happiness or into the gloom of wretchedness. It may seem a trifling fault not to refrain our tongue from evil, our lips from guile—like the cloud no bigger than a man's hand; but, like that cloud, if this fault be not kept in check it will soon spread itself over the whole sky of our life, and deprive us of the warm and cheerful rays of that fellowship one with another which more than anything else is the sunshine and joy of existence.

¶ A sure cure for gossip and slander is to breathe through your nose—keep your mouth shut. A certain amount of your dying body (for you die daily, momentarily) floats off on your breath into the air. And God has filled the world with plant life to absorb such products, such effete and poisonous material. But gossip and slander on your outgoing breath have only people to absorb them. The flowers, happily for their fragrance, have no way of taking them in. Be good enough to the air, good enough to people, to let all wickedness and malice remain inside you. Germs of love, bacilli of brotherliness, will eat them up, and you will be strong and beautiful and beloved.[1]

2. The Apostle's second rule for a happy life is, 'Eschew evil.' The word 'eschew' comes from the same root as the word to 'shy'

[1] M. D. Babcock, *Thoughts for Every-Day Living*, 52.

used of the horse starting back from some object that frightens or scares it. And this is how evil ought to affect us—as the dove starts in the presence of the hawk. But this is not what generally happens. There is much in us that is attracted by evil; and it is difficult when temptation meets us not to follow where it leads. Pleasure seems to lie along that way; the primrose path grows more and more rough and dark, and Evil doffs her gaudy attire, and shows herself in her true colours as a hard and cruel taskmistress. When the prodigal took the goods that fell to his lot, and went forth on his journey, he doubtless thought that he was about to enjoy himself to the full, as he had never done before. He had shaken off the restraints of home, and a father's love and guidance, and was going to have good days; but in a far country he came to himself and saw the folly of his action, and knew that he who would love life and see good days must eschew evil. Thousands are learning this lesson day by day—seeking for pleasure where it can never be found, forgetting this old-time lesson which was old even in the Psalmist's days, that the way to the blessed life is to 'depart from evil.'

¶ Dr. Hutton tells the story of the captain of a Mississippi boat to whom a passenger put the question: 'I suppose you know all the sandbanks on this river.' 'No,' said the skilled navigator, 'but I know where the deep water is, and I keep in the mid-channel.'

3. The Apostle's third rule for a happy life is 'Do good.' To do good is the very salt of life. It is what keeps the love of life from decaying or corrupting. We are told of our Lord that He 'went about continually doing good,' and we know that though He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, still He had in Him a never-failing source of joy, which from time to time broke forth in enraptured utterances to His Father, and in blessing upon mankind. Not the least of the sources of this joy was the knowledge that He was doing good day by day, and sowing in the world seeds of happiness which would blossom and bear fruit in after days. The selfish man who lives for himself cannot enjoy life. He is miserable; but let him change and think more of others than of himself, and what a difference!

¶ How well Dickens puts this in his *Christmas Carol*. At the beginning of the story we have a portrait of Scrooge, a tight-fisted man, hard as a grindstone, sharp as a flint from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire, secret and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, 'How are you?' No beggar implored him for a trifle; no children asked him the time of day. Rich enough he was, but dismal, morose, and melancholy. He had never done good to any one. He had thought and lived only for himself. But he is visited by three ghosts—the ghost of the past, the ghost of the present, and the ghost of the future—and they teach him a lesson, and he becomes a good friend, a good master, and a good man, and opens his heart and his purse to others, and as a consequence, he begins to love the life he once hated, and to see the good days he once had no faith in.[1]

4. The Apostle's fourth rule for a happy life is 'Seek peace and ensue it.' Quarrels, strifes, jealousies, variance, hatred, and such-like make life intolerable. The frequent suicides that we read of in the daily papers are often traceable to the gloom and despair that proceed from strife. One member of a household with a bad temper can make the whole household wretched. The violent temper that destroys like a storm, the sulky temper that depresses like a fog, the irritable temper that bristles like the fretful porcupine—these things are enemies to the love of life, and unless we are very strong they sour our good days. When Jesus visited His disciples after the Resurrection, His first word to them was, 'Peace be unto you.' It is true it was the common salutation among the Jews; but on the lips of Him who spake as never man spake, it was more. It was His blessing to them. In union with Him, they were to be in union with one another, and to find such strength and joy in this fellowship as would make them triumphant over the tribulations

[1] Stopford A. Brooke.

and persecutions that would meet them in the world around. Sometimes it is not possible to live at peace with others, for they will not be at peace with us; but, as a general rule, if we seek peace and pursue it, we shall find it.

¶ The Rev. John Russell was Vicar of Swymbridge, in North Devon. At his funeral the entire neighbourhood was gathered—clergy, squires, farmers, young and old—all sorts and conditions of men; and amongst them, not a few of the Gipsy tribe whom he often met when riding to the meet. They used to bring their children to him to be baptized, and regarded him as a kind of patron of their class. As the great concourse moved away from the graveside, a farmer was asked what he thought was the secret of this widespread regard. 'Oh, sir,' he said, 'he wasn't very much of a parson, you know, in the way of visiting and such like; *but he was such a man to make peace in a parish.*' And then he told the tale of a chance meeting with Mr. Russell on the roadside, of the turning of the horse's head in consequence of a conversation which then took place, of a visit paid to a sick man's bed, and a reconciliation brought about between a nephew and a dying uncle by a few plain words of homely kindness and common-sense.[1]

Life Worth Living.

1 Pet. iii. 10.—'He that would love life.'

The text is a quotation from a Psalm. The quotation in the original is slightly varied in the old Greek translation, and by St. Peter. One is tempted to wish that the Revised Version, instead of adopting 'he that would love life,' had just added a few letters to the Authorized translation. We should then read, 'he that willeth to love life,' that is, 'he whose deliberate will it is to love life; he who sets himself to love a life, which is true life.'

1. The question is often asked, 'Is life worth living?' As Christians we should not answer without careful explanation. What is meant by 'life'? There are two words in the New Testament which, from the necessities of our language, are alike rendered 'life.' One of these words signifies the principle of animal life, the things by which that life is preserved or gladdened, and the span of time through which it is continued. The other word belongs to a higher sphere. It is the new life, which may be stunted or strengthened, as grace is used or abused; and which, after the Resurrection, is to be clothed upon with a fitting framework. The first of these terms gives us man's natural existence as one of the animal creation; the second, man's supernatural existence as a son of God. Christ was incarnate to impart this. The narrative of creation tells us that 'the first man Adam became a living soul.' This fact the Apostle transmutes into dogma—'the last Adam became a life-creating spirit.' 'I am come,' said Christ, 'that they might have life.'

The question, then, for us as Christians really is not whether life, in the New Testament sense of the word, is worth living, but whether existence, under mere animal or external conditions, is worth living?

(1) This, no doubt, is an intricate question, and much may be said in favour of a reply in the negative. We may be reminded of the transitoriness of human existence. The vanity of our expectations may be appealed to, the compression of the successive objects of hope in the iron grasp of the coarse hand of necessity. The loss of those we love is a condition of advancing years. And this is accompanied by the protracted humiliation of the breaking up of the bodily machine. With this comes weariness of life. Nay, often it comes long before old age. One young spirit, who passed by the terrible gate of suicide into the other world, wrote, just before he dropped the pen for ever, 'the good things come off so seldom.' Of all forms of madness, 'seeing things exactly as they are' seemed to Voltaire the most appalling and the most hopeless. Add to all this the remorse which for so many comes in the sequel of life—the conviction that they 'have behaved so as to be of no service to the world, but by being made an example of the woeful effects of vice and folly.'

(2) Again, much may be urged in mitiga-

[1] *Memoirs of Archbishop Temple*, i. 313.

tion of this pessimism. 'Life rightly used,' exclaimed a great statesman, 'has happiness for each of its ages.' The sweetness of domestic love; the pleasures of human society and friendship; the overplus of health over sickness and pain; activities, expectations, little surprises that come to the weariest lot; the air, the sky, the sunshine—these, and a thousand like things, are woven into a contexture of no funereal tint. 'Take short, not distant, views of life' was the advice of a great wit; but it is profoundly wise. At the close of Ecclesiastes is a passage about death whose profound sadness has made a deep impression upon the soul of man. Yet even here we listen to no Hebrew Byron or Schopenhauer. 'Or ever the silver cord be loosed.' Human existence is a continuity of silver thread. It is not a scourge to discipline us until the blood runs down, or a halter to hang ourselves withal.

> Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
> No life that breathes with human breath
> Hath ever truly long'd for death.
>
> 'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant,
> Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
> More life, and fuller, that I want.

2. But about the answer to the question, Is existence elevated into life worth living? we as Christians can make no doubt.

(1) Present acceptance makes life worth living. And present acceptance is promised to all who come to God through Christ. This makes existence tolerable. As St. Bernard says, 'A tranquil God tranquillizes all things, and to see His peacefulness is to be at peace.'

(2) There are times of exquisite pleasure in communion with God. These compensate for the languor of old age and for the slow 'martyrdom of life.' They support the believer under the cross. He began by carrying it; it ends by carrying him. Samuel Rutherford, one of the greatest of Puritan preachers, speaking in the open air in Scotland, and pointing to the sheet-lightning playing in the evening over the hills, exclaimed, 'One blink of God, howbeit short as yonder flash of fire in the air, were worth half a heaven.'

¶ There are two pictures which contrast the two views of life.

One exhibited at Paris is named 'Le Soir de la Vie.' We see a boat on a river, and a company dancing some way off. Others are gathering flowers, or splashing their hot hands in the water. But on the far bank is an old man, whose attitude denotes the sadness with which he surveys the enjoyments of the young. He is near a withered tree. A lyre with slack strings is thrown down. The shadows are falling. The moon rises, and swallows are just flitting across the evening sky.

The other picture, familiar to many of us, is that of 'Augustine and Monica,' by Ary Scheffer. Mother and son look out from a window in a garden at Ostia. They gaze on a blue sky, and on a sea lit by stars. Augustine is thirty-three; Monica verges on old age. They speak of God, and of that which cannot change; of the 'ancient and uncreated Beauty, the first and only Fair.' Of one thing they are sure. 'If only this were continued and all other visions of far different and lower kind removed, and this alone bore off and absorbed and withdrew those who look upon it, so that the eternal life after which we sighed were such as was this moment of intelligence, were not this enough? Were not this the fulfilment of "enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"?' For Monica there is no withered tree as the fitting symbol of the evening of life; but the pure sky, the thousand stars, and the peace of God lying more sweetly than the dreams of youth on that faded face. Ask Monica the question—'Is life worth living?' Her answer will be—'He that hath the Son hath the life.'[1]

Harm.

1 Pet. iii. 13.—'Who is he that will harm you?'

THERE are several reasons why it seems right to say something about this passage. Taking it as it stands, not a few protest at once—'It it pure nonsense and bears no sort of relation to the truth.' They object that in their experience the best and finest spirits go under. A clean and prayerful life, full of good and

[1] W. Alexander, *The Great Question*, 69f.

loving comradeship, is apparently no protection against torture and physical dissolution. Others probably say that the text is an unworthy one, suggesting craven thoughts. They retort, 'I don't wish to escape harm. If in a good cause my suffering can bring freedom, happiness, or safety to any soul, then let it come. I don't want to shirk, and I am not going to insure myself against discomfort by any sickly religiosity.' Let us try, then, to meet these objections, because there is no doubt that their force is still felt by many. There are two stages to the answer.

1. First of all, let us look at the letter from which the words are taken. It is written from the city of Rome by St. Peter, and its general tenor is to brace and encourage those of his friends and followers who are about to encounter persecution. He himself is not far from his martyrdom. He has, perhaps, actually witnessed such scenes as those which took place in the gardens of Nero, when Christians were tied to stakes, their clothes being soaked in oil and then set fire to, while the Emperor in the costume of a jockey drove about and entertained his friends with the gay spectacle. St. Peter, then, is writing to his friends, and he proclaims, 'Who can harm you if you are followers of that which is good? No one. No real harm can touch you. Bodily suffering, it is true, may fall to your share. But if you suffer for righteousness' sake, you are happy. Yours is a splendid privilege. Banish fear, and don't worry. But worship and reverence in your hearts Christ as Lord. Let Him reign there supreme.' Now there is nothing craven about that. There is no suggestion that religion is going to save them from discomfort. Far from it. Only the harm, as surely as it comes, will not harm those who are faithful. No one can reasonably doubt that when Peter wrote in this manner he had in his mind the saying of his Master, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will tell you whom ye shall fear. Fear him who after he hath killed hath power to cast soul and body into Gehenna. Yea, I say unto you, fear him.'

2. This is the second stage in the reply, and it brings us to the root of the whole situation. Charles Lamb, writing on the subject of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, declared that Malvolio, when he was derided by his friends as a lunatic, proved his unshakable sanity by 'thinking nobly of the soul.' There is a great danger in these days that we should think meanly of the soul. That is not to say that we should be selfishly occupied with the task of 'saving our own miserable personalities.' But our very existence as free beings is the unselfish gift of our Father-God, and it is a shabby and despicable thing to be careless of how we use that gift. Surely our characters are worth training, our purity and honour worth preserving, our humility and self-control worth developing. Let us, at all costs, think nobly of the soul. Immortality is assured to us, but a mean and paltry immortality would be worse than eternal annihilation. If we fear anything at all, let us fear to neglect living up to the best that is in us, that we may not in the future have to look back with regret that we did not play our part as cleanly and honourably as we might have done. Christ is our standard. By Him we measure our good. 'The disciple is not greater than his Master. It is enough that he be as his Master.' We shall never find ourselves beyond Him. We shall seldom reach His standard. It is enough for us that we measure the difference and try to make it up. The real teaching of Christianity is the readjustment of all values. The standard of Christ is the highest known. And in the forefront this is set—that He thinks nobly of the soul and sets the greatest value upon it.

¶ Miss Guiney, the American poetess, pictures a man beset by many frailties saying to his guardian angel, 'I cannot carry the battle,' and the ringing answer is returned:

Back to the ranks! what matter
To win or to lose the whole,

As judged by the little judges
Who hearken not well, nor see?
Not thus, by the outer issue
The Wise shall interpret thee!

Thy will is the very, the only,
  The solemn event of things;
The weakest of hearts defying
  Is stronger than all these kings.

Though out of the past they gather
  Mind's Doubt, and Bodily Pain,
And pallid Thirst of the Spirit
  That is kin to the other twain.

And Grief in a cloud of banners,
  And ringletted Vain Desires,
And Vice, with the spoils upon him
  Of thee and thy beaten sires,

While Kings of eternal evil
  Yet darken the hills about,
Thy part is, with broken sabre
  To rise on the last redoubt;

To fear not sensible failure
  Nor covet the game at all,
But fighting, fighting, fighting,
  Die, driven against the wall!

Safe from Harm.

1 Pet. iii. 13.—'Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers (RV 'zealous') of that which is good?'

Let us hear Christ ask that question. For He is the expert here. In all matters of importance sane men go to the best expert they can discover, and act on his authority. By common consent, in things that pertain to eternity the supreme expert is the Supremely Good, who is Jesus Christ our Lord. At the back of our minds we all, of whatever varying types we may be, admit His right to speak upon these matters, and our duty to listen. And what is it that He says? He says at least four things.

1. First, He says that *goodness is* beyond words *important, and sin is* beyond words *dangerous*. Now listen to Him when He says that; and listen in the sense of learning and marking and inwardly digesting His teaching. It is so easy to make light of wrong, and so easy to find good reasons for making light of it. Everybody is doing it, and what is our poor sin amongst the sins of so many? So we are inclined to think within ourselves. It is precisely against that sort of thought that Jesus most gravely warns us, for it is the kind of suggestion that comes straight from the Evil One. Every wrong matters, and matters in a sense greater than we can guess. If you sin, at least be prepared to acknowledge that your sin is something from which you cannot lightly turn away. The distinction between good and evil is the one distinction that is supreme.

¶ The degree of our immunity from moral disease is governed absolutely by the degree of our desire for moral health. If we complain that we are slaves to sin, we confess that we desire sin. If we say that at certain times we are overtaken by sin, we proclaim that we are not travelling on the road of virtue. Sin is neither footpad nor assassin; it lives, and can only live, in the heart which does not love goodness with all its strength, with all its earnestness, and with all its appetency.[1]

2. In the second place, He teaches us that *we all need forgiveness*. If we acknowledge that we need to be forgiven—and who would deny it?—then let us give heed to Christ's further word that forgiveness is there for us to take, if we want it, and ask for it rightly. Let us believe that splendid Christ-given fact, and live on our belief. Let us go out to face life's dangers as those whose sins are hidden in the covering garment of the mercy of God.

¶ I do not wish to prophesy smooth things nor sprinkle the way of life with rose-water. I know that if a man breaks the laws of nature, he will be punished to the uttermost, for there is no forgiveness in nature. I know that if a man breaks the laws of society he will find no mercy, for there is no forgiveness in society. But I believe that if a man breaks the law of God his transgressions can be taken away, for there is forgiveness with God.[2]

3. Thirdly, He teaches us that *we can all get power to live well, if we are concerned*

[1] H. Begbie, *Life Changers*, 46.
[2] E. T. Fowler, *Concerning Isabel Carnaby*.

enough about living well; but we must be concerned—asking for it, not casually, but earnestly. You remember the words in the Scripture that indicate the type of desire for goodness that we must display: 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.' Hunger and thirst are big words.

¶ Christ pronounces a benediction on unfulfilled aspiration. The preceding Beatitudes concern some form of attainment—disciplined feeling—an enlightened conscience—humility, meekness. The condition of hunger and thirst is not in itself associated with any kind of virtue—only with striving, yearning dissatisfaction. Indeed, the picture of a ravenous man with a parched throat does not even suggest dignity—yet he may be among the number of the blessed. It is a great demand on faith and patience. The meek seem to possess nothing—those who hunger and thirst after righteousness seem to remain dissatisfied.

> Are there not
> Two points in the adventure of the diver,
> One—when a beggar, he prepares to plunge;
> One—when a prince, he rises with his pearl?

But there is a point between these two when he is submerged and hampered, groping in the slimy darkness for the pearl. That is the strain—before he has found it, when the weight of waters threatens to crush him.

This is the very moment when Christ pronounces His benediction. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst before they are satisfied, before they find the pearl. It is the spirit, the intent of our life that God blesses. We are blessed for what we are, for what we want to be, as well as for what we have, and the blessing of God covers every stage of our life—the first plunge—the period of unfulfilled aspiration—the glorious moment of possession.[1]

4. And lastly, He teaches us that *we,* the essential 'we,' *are in the keeping of a gracious power.* The 'we' that we call the soul, and that belongs to God. He keeps us for a very simple reason. He keeps us because He loves us. Let us try to appreciate how great and strong a thing the love of God for each one of us is. Let us remember that Jesus is the unveiling of the graciousness of God in a measure suited to our capacity for understanding. If we seek goodness and thus are God's, nothing can harm us. That is a great image of the Apostle Paul which is given in the eighth chapter of Romans. You can see him standing within the entrenchments of the Divine love looking round upon all the powers that might threaten him harm, and defying them all from the security of his shelter. Principalities, powers, demons of the air, demons of the deep, the present, the unknown future, life with all its temptings—he faces them all, steady and clear-eyed, and laughs at their menaces while he has the defences of the love of God about him. And who is this last foe that comes with mutterings and threatenings, this pale rider on a pale horse, with features like a skull behind his visor, and bony hands gripping his spear? Lo! the last enemy which shall be overcome—the death which all men fear. But his unvenomed malisons have lost their sting to the man who knows the mercy of God. 'Neither death . . . shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

¶ To keep the soul in ardent goodness taxes and tires. It is not an easy indolence. It is not a way of polite acquiescence. It is not a thoughtless and spiritless obedience to convention. These things hold not the secret of either safety or power or peace. The key to strength and joy hangs at another girdle, even at the girdle of him who knows the greatness of his treasure, the threatening perils that menace it, and who has set his whole life to guard it with a fidelity which nothing can shake or abate. . . . The path that every man takes is a way of peril. Hour by hour he is beset upon every hand with many and great dangers. He may give his heart to the Philistine and cast his shield from him, and be a traitor to the highest. Defence is not to be found in little and punctilious neglects of open and avowed sins. Negation is a cardboard shield. Abstention from evil is a

[1] M. Devine, *The Religion of the Beatitudes,* 86.

wooden sword painted to look like steel. He that would go in that great way with an undaunted soul and return with victory as his guerdon, must cast his soul on God (He loves the burthen!) and guard the sacred fire that burns upon the altar of his own heart. It is no way of ease that he takes. His face is set to the Holy City, where abides all that is noble and good. Steep and hard is the ascent, rough and troubled is the way, but he is safe who has made the everlasting God his refuge, and under whom are ever the everlasting arms.[1]

Fearless.

1 Pet. iii. 14.—'Fear not their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord.'

There is no doubt that the reading adopted in the Revised Version is the true one, as attested by weighty evidence in the manuscripts, and as in itself more probable by reason of its very difficulty. The reading adopted in the Authorized Version is likely to have arisen from a marginal note which crept into the text, and was due to some copyist who was struck by St. Peter's free handling of the passage, and wished to make the quotation verbally accurate. Now if we think for a moment of the Jew's reverence for the letter of Scripture, and then think again of the Jew's intense monotheism and dread of putting any creature into the place of God, we shall understand how saturated with the belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ, and how convinced that it was the vital centre of all Christian teaching, this Apostle must have been when, without a word of explanation, he took his pen, and as it were, drew it through 'Lord God' in Isaiah's words, and wrote in capitals over it, 'Christ as Lord.'

¶ The Apostle directly identifies *Christ* with *Jehovah*, and so attests His deity in the most unequivocal manner. Archbishop Alexander indeed singles out this verse as more than any other assuring him of the Divinity of Jesus, and adds that its restoration to its rightful force outweighs nearly all that can be said against the Revised Version.

1. 'Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord.' That is St. Peter's addition to Isaiah's words, and it is not a mere piece of tautology, but puts great emphasis into the exhortation. What is a man's heart, in New Testament and Old Testament language? It is the very centre-point of the personal self. And when St. Peter says, 'Hallow him in your hearts,' he means that, deep down in the very midst of your personal being, as it were, there should be, fundamental to all and interior to all, this reverential awe and absolute trust in Jesus Christ—a habitual thought, a central emotion, an all-dominant impulse. 'Out of the heart are the issues of life.' Put the healing agent into it, the fountain-head, and all the streams that pour out thence will be purified and sweetened. Deep in the heart put Christ, and life will be pure.

¶ I can never fully tell you what I owe to you, but perhaps I can suggest to you something of my debt if I tell you of a dear friend of mine—Lieut. Harold Parry, K.R.R.—who, a short time ago, at the age of twenty, laid down his life in France. No man I have ever known more truly deserved the name 'Happy Warrior.' He was as white as the airiest clouds of a summer sky, and as pure as the dew in the cup of a flower. The first time I met him was just after he became a member of Exeter College, Oxford, at a meeting where he prayed, and I then knew that the possession of the great secret was not through the struggle of the years, but was the gift of God. He was only eighteen then, but his soul had entered into a real and tender intimacy with his Father. He did not ask for things; he talked to God about the joys of communion, and thanked Him for the treasures of His love. . . . He silently spoke to one of the beatitude, 'Blessed are the "white" men: for they shall see God.' His presence shrivelled up my materialism; he drew back the veil, and one saw the beautiful contour of the country of his dreams. He made a splendid soldier, and the testimonies to his courage and resourcefulness have been no surprise to me. We know,

[1] G. B. Austin, *Beautiful Gates in Life*, 143.

however, what he meant when he wrote: 'I am not a soldier at heart.' He was true to his resolves—or one should rather say to his being—for every drop of his blood was the blood of an idealist.[1]

2. And so we come to the next point, and that is the Christian courage and calmness that ensue from hallowing Christ in the heart.

(1) The Apostle first puts his exhortation: 'Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled,' then he presents to us an opposite injunction, obedience to which is the only means of obeying the first exhortation. If you do not sanctify Christ in your hearts, you cannot help being afraid of their terror, and troubled. If you do, then there is no fear that you will fall into that snare. That is to say, the one thing that delivers men from the fears that make cowards of us all is to have Christ lodged within their hearts. Sunshine puts out ordinary fires. They who have the awe and the reverent love that knit them to Jesus Christ, and who carry Him within their hearts, have no need to be afraid of anything besides. Only he who can say, 'The Lord is the strength of my life' can go on to say, 'Of whom shall I be afraid?' There is nothing more hopeless than to address to men ringed about with dangers the foolish exhortation, 'Cheer up, do not be frightened,' unless you can tell them some reason for not being frightened. And the one reason that will carry weight with it in all circumstances is the presence of Jesus.

With Christ in the vessel
I smile at the storm.

The world comes to us and says: 'Do not be afraid, do not be afraid; be of good courage; pluck up your heart, man.' The Apostle comes and says: 'Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts; and then, and only then, will you be bold.' The boldness that fronts the certain dangers and calamities and the possible dangers and calamities of this life without Christ is not boldness, but foolhardiness. It is easy to whistle when going through the churchyard, and to say, 'Who's afraid?' But the ghosts rise all the same, and there is only one thing that lays them, and that is—the present Christ.

(2) In like manner the sanctifying of Jesus Christ in the heart is the secret of calmness. 'Fear not their fear, neither be troubled.' One wonders if Peter was thinking of another saying: 'Let not your heart be troubled; neither let it be afraid.' Perhaps he was. At any rate, his thought is parallel with our Lord's when He said, 'Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, and believe in me.' Two alternatives are possible: we shall have either troubled hearts, or hearts calmed by faith in Christ. The ships behind the breakwater do not pitch and toss. The little town up amongst the hills, with the high cliffs around it, lies quiet, and 'hears not the loud winds when they call.' And the heart that has Christ for its possession has a secret peace, whatever strife may be raging round it.

¶ Describing the force of the waves which beat on the Eddystone lighthouse, a writer goes on to say, 'But without a quiver the lighthouse supports these terrible attacks. Yet it bends toward them as if to render homage to the power of its adversaries. The summit of the tower describes an arc of more than a yard in extent. For the rest, this very pliancy may be regarded as a pledge of durability. Towers built after this fashion are, in fact, reeds of stone which bend before the wind; but, like the reeds, they raise their heads again as soon as the hurricane is past.' Let me then meet the storms of life with the fixedness and plasticity with which the lighthouse overcomes the wild tempest.[1]

[1] W. Bardsley Brash, *Letters to 'The Happy Warrior,'* 38.

Christianity.

1 Pet. iii. 15.—'Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.'

THERE is here a play upon the words in the original which we fail to see in our Version. It seems in English as if there were a contrast between the giving the answer and the reason, when, in fact, they are the same. We might

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

read it; be ye ready always to give a justification to anyone who would require you to justify the hope that is in you.

The hope that is in us is the Christian hope. Now we are Christians by inheritance. Born in a Christian land, of Christian parents, we have been 'called' in God's good Providence 'to this state of salvation.' But this is not a sufficient reply to the man who asks 'Why are you a Christian?' The mere accident of birth cannot be enough. On this principle a heathen by birth should remain a worshipper of many gods, or a Muhammadan remain a Muslim. In our case, indeed, the circumstance of our birth is a blessing; it is on the right side, and in our favour. But it brings a responsibility with it. It will add to our condemnation if we have had the light from our entrance into the world, and yet have not apprehended or used it intelligently. It is our inheritance, but what if, having the title deeds, we have never taken the trouble to examine them, but have been content to take and enjoy our estate, and lo! the time comes when our right of possession is challenged, when we are told there is a flaw in the succession, and we have no answer to make? No, we must have a better reason than this to give.

Why am I a Christian?

1. I am a Christian because I believe in the Founder of Christianity, in the Christ, not only of theology, but of history. As we read in the Gospels of the life of Christ we cannot help being struck not only by His work and His teaching, but by what He says about Himself. Again and again He puts Himself in the foreground. 'Come unto me,' is His constant cry to men. He declares Himself to be King, Master, Saviour, Judge of man. He claims for Himself the personal allegiance and devotion of mankind. It is this that primarily distinguishes Him from the rest of teachers, not because He was guilty of self-assertion, but because it was true. And he who would be a Christian must take Christ at His own estimate of Himself. We must believe Him to be who and what He said He was.

2. But I am a Christian because I believe what He taught. We cannot separate the Teacher from His teaching. We cannot say that He was the best of men, but that His teaching was untrue and not to be believed; for then the best of men would be the worst of teachers. And this is an impossible position for any reasoning man to take; it is a *reductio ad absurdum*. What, then, did He teach? What does He tell us which we accept as true because we are Christians, and believe in the Christ who said it?

(1) Christianity, as He teaches it, is a philosophy which guides us into all the truth, if we will but follow it patiently. In every religion worthy of the name there is to be found some grain or grains of truth, but in Christianity we have a mine of priceless wisdom. As it has been well said, 'The teaching of Christ contains all that is beautiful and good and wise in other systems. It supplements and supersedes all. It is the final revelation. What other religions sought, the Christian religion has found.'

(2) Christianity is a moral system which leads to righteousness towards God and man. This is the essence of the religion of Christ. Nothing in it takes the place of right doing: 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.' His enemies confirmed it, as they acknowledged, one and all, that the Founder of this new religion was righteous. History testifies to the fact, as it tells how, wherever Christianity has made its way, it has been a new and potent force for righteousness to the world, whether ancient or modern.

¶ The astonishing spread of Christianity through the length and breadth of the Roman Empire was not merely nor mainly due to the intellectual ability nor the organizing capacity of the early Christian missionaries, nor even to their devotional zeal. These doubtless were contributory factors, but the main factor was the type of life displayed by the Christians themselves. The best men of the time were profoundly dissatisfied with the coarseness and selfishness and ineffective intellec-

tualism with which their social surroundings were charged. They were longing for an atmosphere of thought and feeling, and for modes of life and conduct, to which their nobler nature could respond. And gradually they became aware that what they were seeking for was in their midst—little communities of men and women living together as members of a united family live, tending to their sick, caring for their poor, teaching their ignorant, consigning their dead with reverent hopefulness to the grave, always ready to place their beneficent activities at the disposal of those outside their own fold who were in need of them. And so they were attracted, and the attraction gradually became stronger till at length they found themselves swept into the current of the new movement, and ready to live and die in promoting it.[1]

(3) Christianity is a revelation of man to himself. It tells man what for long centuries he has tried to find out, and has failed. 'What am I? Whence came I? Whither am I going? men have asked. There have been many answers, but none of them satisfied the longings of men until Christ came and taught man what he had so long wanted to know. Man is divine; he has come from God; he must return to God. This is the answer of Christianity to man's questionings.

¶ Far back in the dawn of Christianity in these lands, when Augustine landed on the shores of Kent and brought the glorious light of the Gospel to England, we read that the wise men of Northumbria gathered in conference with representatives of the new faith. The contrast between the darkness and the pagan doctrines regarding the future world and the light that comes from Christianity is easily discerned in the statement of an aged Ealdorman: 'So seems the life of man, O king', said he, 'as a sparrow's flight through the hall when you are sitting at meat in wintertide, with the warm fire lighted on the hearth, but the icy rain-storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door, and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then flying forth from the other vanishes into the wintry darkness whence it came. So tarries for the moment the life of man in our sight, but what is before it, what after it, we know not. If this new teaching tells us aught certainly of these, let us follow it'.[1]

(4) Christianity is a revelation of God to man. It is only in Christ we can know God as a loving Father. Nature can tell us of His majesty, His power, His greatness, His wisdom, His providence, but it knows little or nothing of His loving Fatherhood. No teacher before Christ came, not even Moses or David, dreamed that this could be. But Christ has taught us that God is a Father, longing that the children who in their wilfulness have become estranged from Him should return, never faltering in His compassion, never wearying in His patience, never hesitating at any sacrifice: 'God so loved the world that he gave.'

(5) Christianity gives man a new motive for right doing. Not merely admiration for the good nor fear of the consequences had proved sufficient to transform man. But Christ revealed the true secret. What admiration or fear could not do, love alone could do. 'If ye love me, keep my commandments'; 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.'

¶ In the course of the Armenian atrocities a young woman and her brother were pursued down the street by a Turkish soldier, cornered in an angle of the wall, and the brother was slain before his sister's eyes. She dodged down an alley, leaped a wall, and escaped. Later, being a nurse, she was forced by the Turkish authorities to work in the military hospital. Into her ward was brought, one day, the same Turkish soldier who had slain her brother. He was very ill. A slight inattention would insure his death. The young woman, now safe in America, confesses to the bitter struggle that took place in her mind. The old Adam cried, 'Vengeance'; the new Christ cried, 'Love'. And, equally to the man's good and to her own, the better side of her conquered, and she nursed him as carefully as any other patient in the ward. The recognition had been mutual, and one day,

[1] W. H. Carnegie, *Personal Religion and Politics*, 24.

[1] J. Harland, *Only the Minister*, 173.

unable longer to restrain his curiosity, the Turk asked his nurse why she had not let him die, and when she replied, 'I am a follower of Him who said "Love your enemies and do them good"', he was silent for a long time. At last he spoke: 'I never knew that there was such a religion. If that is your religion tell me more about it, for I want it.'[1]

(6) Christianity throws a light on the mystery of evil in God's world. It does not ignore it as do some teachers, nor does it identify it with mere ignorance or talk of it as the lowest form of good. It does not tell us, as teachers of bygone days have taught, that evil is the work of a twin God, a God of evil, endowed with equal powers, and capable of endless strife with the God of goodness. But Christ teaches us that evil is a disease, which is not part of the nature of man as God made him, is not of the will of God, and He points us to a remedy for the disease which no other teacher had discovered. 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sin.'

(7) Christianity is a religion for all. Other religions have been in their very character suitable only for some. They have been invented for the classes, not for the masses. They have required some condition which all do not possess. But Christianity is for all. Its teaching is so profound that the wisest cannot exhaust it, and yet so simple that the unlearned peasant and the little child can find sweetness in its truths. It is for all, and so in every land where it has been carried it has taken root. In all the nations, the most polished, the most degraded, it has grown and flourished. Men learned like the priest of India, or savage as the barbarian of Patagonia, the conversion of whom to Christianity convinced Darwin of the good of Christian missions, have alike yielded to the rule of Christ, and have become His willing, loyal subjects.

[1] H. E. Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character*, 166.

Conscience.

1 Pet. iii. 16.—'Having a good conscience.'

THE word 'conscience' does not occur often in the Bible. It does not occur once in the Old Testament. But the thing 'conscience' is in the Bible from first to last. For instance, take the very first story in the Bible—the Fall of Man. Why was it that our first parents, when they had eaten the forbidden fruit, were ashamed to look in each other's faces; and why was it that when they heard the Almighty walking in the garden towards them they hid among the trees? That was conscience. Or take the very next story in the Bible—the Death of Abel. Why did Cain hear a voice rising from his brother's blood to heaven, and why did he flee from it, a fugitive and a vagabond? That was conscience. Conscience, in fact, is everywhere in the Bible. Without conscience there would be no religion.

1. Conscience has been called *the moral sense*. Now what does that mean? It means this, that as by the sense of taste we distinguish what is sweet and what is sour, and by the sense of hearing we distinguish what is harmonious and what is discordant, and by the other bodily senses we discriminate the qualities of material things, so in the soul there is a sense which distinguishes right from wrong, and that is the conscience. If anyone were asked why it is wrong to kill, and to steal, and to lie, perhaps the first thing that would occur to him might be to say that it is because it is contrary to the law of God, meaning the Ten Commandments. But then he might be asked, 'Before the Ten Commandments were written was it not wrong to kill, and to steal, and to lie?' Of course it was, and that shows that the answer is inadequate. There have been many nations who have never seen the Ten Commandments, and yet they have known quite well that to lie, and to steal, and to kill are wrong. How did they know that? St. Paul seems to tell us when he says, in one of the profoundest passages of his writings, 'When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the

law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts': and the profoundest of the Greek dramatists makes one of his heroines appeal to what he calls 'the unwritten laws of God that know not change,' and he says of them, 'They are not of to-day nor yesterday, but live for ever, nor can man assign when first they sprang to be.'

¶ One cannot be long among this primitive people without feeling that they have their own vivid human interests and their own serious thoughts about life, however much these may differ from our ways of thinking. Mingled with gross superstition there is much shrewd sense and sound moral teaching. As an exposition of the terrors of a guilty conscience what could be finer than their parable of the wild beast that committed a crime and fled through the forest. Fearing it was pursued it stopped and listened. The white ants were working busily in the grass with a steady swish, swish. 'It is the pursuers,' cried the fugitive, and fled on. Again it paused and listened, and again it fled, and so continued without respite till it sank and died.

Such legends spring out of a deep moral seriousness which, however it may be overlaid by blind and savage customs, provides a soil where the Gospel can take root.[1]

2. The conscience is '*the categorical imperative.*' That is a name given to it by Kant, one of the great writers on conscience. It sounds very learned, but a word is none the worse for being big, if one understands it; in fact, a difficult word is often the best when one understands clearly what it means, and it is not at all difficult to understand what this means. It brings out a second feature with regard to conscience, and it is this. As soon as it is ascertained that one course is right and the opposite one wrong, the conscience commands us to follow the one course and avoid the other. Thus it is imperative; and it is a categorical imperative, that is to say, it accepts no excuse. The course that conscience commands may apparently be contrary to our interests; it may be dead against our inclinations; it may be contrary to all we are advised to do by friends and companions; it may be contrary to the commands of principalities or powers, and the voice of the multitude; but conscience does not on that account in the least withdraw its imperative. It is a categorical imperative. We must obey. We may yield to temptation, or be carried away by the force of passion; but we know that we ought to obey. It is our duty, and that is the grand word of conscience. It is conscience that tells us what duty is. The great crises of human life occur when conscience is commanding one course, and self-interest, or passion, or authority is commanding another course, and it has to be decided which course a man is to take; and accordingly the interpreters of human life have availed themselves of these crises in the great imaginative books of the world.

¶ Upon a day in the sixteenth century at Rome, some men bearing the title of Inquisitors were assembled to decree the immobility of the earth. A prisoner stood before them. His brow was illumined by genius. It was Galileo. The old man shook his old and venerable head. His soul revolted against the absurd violence of those who sought to constrain him to deny truths revealed to him by God. But his pristine energy was worn down by long suffering and sorrow; the monkish menace crushed him. He strove to submit. He raised his hand—he too—to declare the immobility of the earth. But as he raised his hand, he raised his weary eyes to that heaven they had searched throughout long nights to read thereon one line of universal law; they encountered a ray of that sun they so well knew, motionless amid the moving sphere. Remorse entered his soul; an involuntary cry burst from the believer's heart. *'E pur se muove!'* ('And yet it moves').[1]

3. Conscience is *a sentence of guilty or not guilty.* As soon as the right course or the wrong has been chosen, and the deed done, conscience unfolds a further power by passing sentence of justification or condemnation—justification involving reward and happiness,

[1] J. H. Morrison, *Streams in the Desert*, 33.

[1] Mazzini.

and condemnation involving punishment and misery. Conscience has often been compared to a Court of Justice, in which there are the culprit, the judge, the jury and the witnesses; but, strange to say, these are all in a man's own breast. And the executioner is there too who carries out the sentence. There is not one of us who does not know in some degree both the pain and horror of a condemning conscience, and the pleasure of an approving conscience. A habitually approving conscience gives, even to the outward man, elasticity and courage, while a habitually condemning conscience gives to a man a look of confusion and misery.

¶ In all ages the higher imaginative literature has found its best resources in depicting the horrors of a guilty conscience. The ancient Greeks represented these terrors by the Furies, who with shadowy, silent, but remorseless steps, pursued the criminal until they pulled him down. Shakespeare showed it, in such dramas as *Macbeth* and *Richard III.* On the night before the battle in which the latter received the reward of his deeds, ghosts of the victims of his tyranny passed one by one through his tent, summoning him to meet them on the battlefield, until the man, streaming with perspiration, sprang from his bed, crying—

> My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
> And every tongue brings in a several tale,
> And every tale condemns me for a villain.

But observe this, that not only does a man's own conscience pass sentence on his conduct, but the consciences of others, if they chance to be acquainted with it, do so too, and to this may be due a great intensification either of the pleasure or of the pain which conscience causes. For instance, a man may have committed a crime and suffered for it in his conscience, but gradually time assuages his pain, and he is forgetting it. Suddenly it is found out, and the conscience of the public is brought to bear on him. He is put out of respectable society, and feels now for the first time the full enormity of what he has done. On the contrary, a friend or a wife may be to a man a second conscience, and the approval of this second conscience may have no less force than even the approval of his own conscience in encouraging him to seek everything that is high and noble and to avoid everything that is base.[1]

4. The conscience is *an intuition of God.* We have seen that as soon as the choice is made and the deed done conscience inflicts immediate reward or punishment. But it has another function. It hints unmistakably at reward and punishment yet to come, and from another source. You remember how Hamlet expresses this when contemplating the crime of suicide:

> The dread of something after death,
> The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
> No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
> And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
> Than fly to others that we know not of.
> Thus conscience does make cowards of us all.

In the Egyptian Book of the Dead, two hundred and forty figures are represented as meeting the soul when it enters the other world. These are virtues, and to each of them the soul has to state how far it has practised these virtues in this life; and besides this strict inquiry, up in the corner of the picture God is represented weighing the heart. Few nations have had as vivid a conception as had the ancient Egyptians of the world to come, but on the other hand there have been very few that have not had some notion of it; and one of these invariably is the notion of a trial, before entering the next life, of the deeds done in this world. It is quite possible that the scenery of the next life depicted in the Bible may be largely symbolical and not literal. It is very difficult to imagine literally and logically the Judgment Day as it is set forth in the Scriptures, but the idea that it embodies is one that the human mind, once having got hold of it, can never lose. That idea is that our deeds are not cast off in this world, but travel with us to the next world, and will there have to be answered for.

[1] J. Stalker.

But here is the point. At that Judgment Day, whatever be its form, who is to be the Judge? It is not of its own judgment that the conscience is afraid. There may be, as the Christian Scriptures represent, a great public demonstration, in which the universal conscience is brought to bear on every particular case, and that thought contains a wonderful solemnity; but it is not even of that that conscience is afraid. No, on the Throne there is a Judge more august. The Lord is Judge. It used to be thought that in the very composition of the word conscience there was a reference to God. The word is made up of two words, *con*, meaning 'with,' and *scientia*, or 'knowledge,' and it was supposed that the meaning of the word was that we know our life along with God. That derivation is now given up, but it exactly expresses the truth. Analyse your own consciousness when conscience is acting, and see if it does not inform you that God is looking on. When you have done something wrong, and are feeling ashamed and horrified, are you not aware that God is near you, and that it is from His hand that retribution is to come? Many thinkers have believed that, apart from Revelation, the strongest evidence of the existence of a God is this testimony of the conscience.

We clamour heavenwards, caught as in a net
Of sorrows; vainly we demand a sign,
The heavens parting, and the word divine
Thunderously uttered, lest we may forget
Its message, yet in speech familiar
To human ears; groping, we stumble yet,
And, bruised and bitter, with our cries beset
The placid sky, and Him who dwells afar.
Oh, human folly! Eyes we have to see
Justice and beauty, and in us abides
The very voice of God, and that keen, white,
Dread sword of God, that all unerringly
Upon its edge evil from good divides—
Sharp, sharp the line that cuts the Infinite.[1]

[1] J. Presland, *Songs of Changing Skies*, 60.

A Good Conscience.

1 Pet. iii. 16.—'Having a good conscience.'

What is conscience? There are those who tell us that it is a direct gift of God to every human soul. There are others who say it is but an evolution of human experience. May there not be a truth in both views? May not the latent power be a direct gift from above, a part of the Divine equipment of every life? But may not its education and development come by way of experience, including the accumulated experience of the race? However it came to us, it is our power to recognize the right and our relation to that right. When we and the right are at one, we have the great joy of what St. Peter calls 'a good conscience.' When we and the right are at variance, we have 'a bad conscience,' the most uncomfortable burden that any soul can carry along life's highway.

1. A good conscience makes the higher enthusiasm possible. To be dubious about the moral quality of a cause is to cut the nerve of one's enthusiasm for it; but any cause which has the conscience of a community behind it has an impetus and an authority little less than Divine. One of the deepest reasons for the exuberant enthusiasm of early Christianity—the enthusiasm that enabled it to endure and to overcome—was the fact that Christ had captured the consciences of His own; He had at once awakened conscience to new power and had commended Himself as Lord and Leader to the conscience which He had awakened. And against all the slanders and persecutions of a dark and cruel day men fell back on this as on their last support and ultimate assurance—it was right to follow Jesus. Among all the devious paths of the world none other was the right path but this. Here was the fellowship of the happy warriors, of each of whom it may be said,

His strength is as the strength of ten
Because his heart is pure.

2. It prompts a man to answer the world's

challenge. When St. Peter speaks of 'being ready to give an answer,' does his own heart condemn him by reminding him of the scene in the judgment hall when Peter the unready so terribly stumbled and fell, and for an answer to a mocking challenge gave only a denial of his Lord? He has learned better things by this time: he would have his readers learn them too, not only for use in great crises and before magistrates, but even in the ordinary intercourse and conversation of life, 'to every man that asketh you a reason.' 'Every cultivated sensible man was expected by the Greeks to be prepared to discuss questions of opinion or conduct intelligently and temperately, to give and receive a reason.' It is amazing how often, alike in ancient and in modern days, even 'cultivated' and 'sensible' men, ready to give an answer on all manner of points of theory, practice, or politics, have stumbled or hesitated or gone a long way round to evade the point when there has been a call for a direct and simple testimony for their faith and their Lord. Their consciences were not easy; they knew afterwards that they would have kept a good conscience by having spoken; they knew that if they had been true to the deepest thing in themselves they would have been found nailing to the mast the Flag of which no man need ever be ashamed.

3. It helps a man to live down slander and criticism. 'Ye are spoken against,' St. Peter says to his readers (1 Pet. iii. 16); the tongues of spite were busy; there was no limit to what they hinted, suggested, disseminated. There are some things that cannot be argued down; they can only be lived down, and for that hard, slow task only a good conscience can give strength. The world is often very blind and very stupid; there is nothing for it but that the servants of God should go on with their appointed task, in their appointed way, in the hope that the world may by and by grow ashamed of its own stupidity. Meantime, in a good conscience there is an inward warmth to weather out the storm, and a not unreasonable argument for the patience of hope.[1]

[1] J. M. E. Ross.

¶ At a critical hour in the life of the famous Tolstoi he came to the conclusion, after studying the Gospels, that the Sermon on the Mount contained the secret of religion, and that its heart-searching and life-changing commands must be obeyed. Love for God and love for man, even his enemies, fastened itself upon his whole life so that ordinary charitable work failed to satisfy him. His fine carriage, passing his miserable neighbours, seemed arrant hypocrisy. He began to loathe that elegant style of life and to long to come as close as possible to the great hard-working and poverty-stricken mass of humanity. 'I am sitting on the back of a man whom I am crushing,' he said. 'I insist on his carrying me, and without setting him free I tell him that I pity him a great deal, and that I have only one desire—that of improving his condition by all possible means, and yet I never get off his back. If I wish to help the poor I must not be the cause of their poverty.'

We find how consistently Tolstoi first acted in conformity to conscience. He retired to the country. He stripped his home of every luxury. He clad himself in the rough clothes of the peasant. He gives up all delicacies. He abstains from all wine and tobacco. He works in the fields when his health permits. He learns to make his own boots. He comtinues to write, but only such books and articles as he believes will help the world toward Christ. Every man may not agree with his manner of life or with his social theories, but every man must agree with his love for humanity and his supreme loyalty to conscience. To be considered a lunatic, and a heretic, and a traitor for twenty years is magnificent heroism.[1]

The Ethics of Christ's Death.

1 Pet. iii. 18.—'The just for the unjust.'

The doctrine of the Atonement is often stated to be immoral.

But such a statement quite ignores the peculiar relation of Christ to God and man, and some of His most important sayings

[1] C. Myers, *Making a Life*, 290.

concerning His death. Under certain circumstances it might be an 'immorality and a crime,' as it has been vehemently called, for the innocent to suffer for the guilty, and for the guilty to be set free because the innocent had suffered. If, because another man had broken the law, I who had kept it were seized by the police and taken before the magistrate and thrust into a prison cell because the law must be vindicated, the real criminal at the same time being set free, that would be a crime none the less flagrant that it was committed by the law.

1. There are three things to be borne in mind as we look up at the Cross and listen to the cry, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' The first is, that Jesus chose that, and the path that led to it, for man's sake. His own words were: 'No man taketh my life from me: I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.' And we have yet to learn that it is immoral for one who loves others to place him voluntarily where the suffering which would otherwise have fallen on them falls upon him. We never say so in ordinary relations. When we read a story of how one who has been wronged by another sees danger approaching him, and steps between him and the danger and receives shock and injury in his own flesh, we do not say it is immoral, we use another word—we call it noble and magnanimous; it stirs our blood, it makes us believe in the Divinity of human nature. We have never read of a mother who wore out her life for an unworthy daughter, refusing to cast her off when she had fallen into sin, clinging to her when those who had tempted her to ruin had turned away from her, sheltering her from the consequence of evil-doing wherever she could, hiding her shame in her own breast, and finally winning her to a better life, but we have been moved to admiration. We may have known all along that it was infinitely more than the sinner deserved, but we have not called it immoral; we have said it is what any noble-minded mother would do. And we can scarcely deny to our Lord, in the name of morality and justice, that which we admit so freely and gratefully in human relations. If it were possible—and no one knows how to deny it—for the Eternal Son of God to step between sinful man and the penalty of his sin, if it were possible for Him to take upon His own soul the ultimate and bitter consequence of man's transgression of the law of righteousness, and if out of pure love to man He voluntarily did this, and by doing it liberated men from the extreme penalty of sin, it is strange to call that action immoral and to deny His right to do it. That is to deny to the highest Person ever known among men the right to the highest form of heroism and goodness known among us. It is to call an action by one name when we perform it, and by another and opposite name when it is done by Him whom we call Master and Lord.

2. The second thing to be remembered as we look up at the Sufferer upon the Cross is His unique relation to God. He is God's Eternal Son; He remembers the glory which He had with God before the world was; He was on an equality with God. 'All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.' The work of bearing the sin of man, of suffering the just for the unjust, was undertaken by Father and Son together. If the Son gave Himself up voluntarily to the temptation of the wilderness, the betrayal and agony of the Garden, the darkness of the Cross, the Father was with Him in it all. He provided the atonement, and out of love to man agreed to the surrender of His well-beloved Son. In the Person of Jesus Christ it may truly be said that God Himself bore the penalty of human sin. And it is an amazing procedure to call it unjust if one elects to bear suffering instead of inflicting it. We all know who deserved to suffer, and we all know who did suffer, but we must be very careful not to dissociate the Father from the Son even in the suffering. It belongs to the very relationship; we rob the figure of all meaning if we deny it. There is not a parent anywhere worthy of the name who does not suffer in the suffering of his child—agony of mind and soul more than the child can know—and who would not far rather bear the suffering than

see it borne. It is all a part of the relationship of love.

3. And, finally, we must take into account as we stand beneath the Cross our Lord's equally unique relation to man. He was the Son of God as no other has been or can be. But the name by which He delighted to call Himself was the Son of Man. We are dealing with a deep mystery when we deal with the dual nature of Christ, and no human intellect can solve the mystery. We simply walk by faith and believe what the Scriptures teach. So while we say that He was God manifest in the flesh, we say also that He so completely took our human nature and entered into our life that everything human belonged to Him; and while He was truly God, enduring the misery of the load of sin on man's behalf, He was also—and this is part of the mystery—man; and not ordinary man, but Representative Man, the Federal Head of the human race—not chosen by men, but chosen by God. And coming into our life and making it all His own, it was inevitable that all through His life He should feel pain and sorrow and shame when men sinned; for they were His men, and this humanity, defiled and cursed and ruined by sin, and yet not feeling its sin, was His humanity. And as brother feels the sin of brother, and mother and father the sin of son and daughter, so, only in an infinite degree, did the pure and holy soul of Christ feel all the pain and shame of the sin of men. And when He felt it He refused to sever Himself from humanity, refused to renounce it and cast it off. As Representative Man He confessed and acknowledged the sin of the race which He had made His own on the Cross. As Representative Man He submitted to the righteousness of God in condemning sin, and to the awful penalty of sin. He submitted that He might deliver from penalty the men whom He loved, whose cause He had made His own, that they, by believing in Him, might receive the remission of sins, might share His own life which He had freely given to the race, and in the strength of that might be able to do the will of God.

¶ Love has only one measure—its willingness to sacrifice itself. Love's general law is to seek to do good to others, by service, toil, suffering, both passively and actively. What does a mother endure for her child? Sleepless nights, without food, as she soothes the suffering of her little one and wins back life and health to the child by the offering and sacrifice of her own health and life. What of Father Damien, and others like him, who became lepers to save lepers? Sister Kate Marsden, too. They gave themselves to remove the curse of leprosy, or at least to remove the darker curse of leprosy. It is love undertaking on another's behalf, by means of sacrifice, to win for them some good. There is nothing great and noble and praiseworthy in the world, but this principle of love is at the root of it. Has this principle been applied to punishment—bearing it for another and winning of favour? In Anglo-Saxon law all penalties could be expiated by fines, *i.e.* by the sacrifice of another. Men were bound and suffered for one another, with and for one another. An exile was accompanied by others into exile, and thus they shared his exile and did him service. That was voluntary exile to bless another. Then there were hostages for cities or nations. The closer the relationship the more the right of those who suffer to suffer for the other. A member of the family, or a representative citizen, the head of the family, or the chief citizen, standing in the place of the family, or city, is substitute. The principle of mediation and love for another pervades all human law, jurisdiction, and equity. Christ is the second head of the human family. Heads of nations act on behalf of nations. Christ is the new head of humanity. We are His in creation. He made us in His own likeness. We are brethren of His. He has a right to stand for us, to plead our cause, to suffer for us, because of the near relation in which He stands to us—the second Adam, the federal head of the race. He has a right to stand on our behalf. Our interests are bound up in Him so closely. He stands nearest to us. His act has a value added because of this right. These things give us a clue to the rationale of the Atonement, and show it to be reasonable and right.[1]

[1] *John Brown Paton*, 372.

This is the Gospel which the first Apostles preached, and with which they shook the world: 'I delivered unto you first of all'—first in point of time and importance—'that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.' And it was by believing St. Paul's message, which was a stumbling-block to the Jew and folly to the Greek, by believing it and trusting Him who died, that men were lifted up out of the pit of immoral and sinful living, and filled with a joy and peace which passed understanding, and with strength to attain to righteousness of life.

I lift mine eyes, and see
Thee, tender Lord, in pain upon the tree,
Athirst for my sake and athirst for me.

'Yea, look upon Me there,
Compassed with thorns and bleeding everywhere,
For thy sake bearing all, and glad to bear.'

I lift my heart to pray:
Thou Who didst love me all that darkened day,
Wilt Thou not love me to the end alway?

'Yea, thee My wandering sheep,
Yea, thee My scarlet sinner slow to weep,
Come to Me, I will love thee and will keep.'

Ah Lord, it is not Thou,
Thou that wilt fail; yet woe is me, for how
Shall I endure who half am failing now?

'Nay, weld thy resolute will
To Mine: glance not aside for good or ill:
I love thee; trust Me still and love Me still.'[1]

In Hades.

1 Pet. iii. 19.—'He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.'

THERE have been many wonderful preaching scenes in history. We can throw our imagination back to antediluvian days and picture to ourselves Noah, the first reformer, preaching repentance as he shaped his planks of gopher-wood for the ark; we can see in our mind's eye the young Ezekiel pleading with stubborn hearts; we can imagine the enthusiasm of the excited crowds that followed John the Baptist, the ascetic mission preacher, in the wilderness; we can call up the scene on the slopes of the mount of Beatitudes when Christ first broke the silence of the ages, and proclaimed the inseverability of God and man; we can dimly conceive the electrical effect of St. Peter's first Pentecostal sermon, and admire the courage of St. Paul's denunciations on Mars Hill; we can think of Savonarola converting Florence, of Wesley and Whitfield washing the grimy faces of the miners with their own tears as they unfolded to them the love of Jesus. But imagination utterly fails us in attempting to realize the preacher, the pulpit, and the congregation spoken of by St. Peter.

It was a supreme moment in the history of this planet. The great drama of man's salvation had closed on Calvary. On the Cross—probably at that very moment—was hanging the body of Him who had lived only that He might bless and heal. Those whom He had blessed and healed had killed Him. Humanity frequently resembles some frightened animal which bites the hand that liberates it. The masses have often crucified their reformers and worshipped them when they were dead. But what was death to Him? or what, for that matter, is death to anyone? To Him it was a royal procession to a newly-acquired dominion. Under the finite state He was straitened by earthly conditions; He was cabined, cribbed, confined by the limitations of embodiment. But freed from the flesh He was quickened in the spirit; Death, the emancipator, opened to Him a new sphere of restoring work. He flies to the comfort and the succour of the spirit of those who lived and sinned and died in the days of Noah. As the Eternal Word He had made them; in Him they had lived and moved and had their being. They were His, they were 'the other sheep not of this fold' to which He had more than once alluded. He will now heal their alienation, deliver them from the bondage of corruption, and restore them to the liberty of sons of God.

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

It has been often asked why mention is made only of these particular sinners before the flood. It is partly, perhaps, because of the analogy the Apostle proceeds to draw from the waters of the flood to the waters of baptism, and partly because—if we may follow out Augustine's comment upon the mysterious hint given in the first four verses of the sixth chapter of the Book of Genesis—those antediluvians were guilty of exceptional lawlessness, of a nature concerning which it would not be expedient to speculate, but which appears to necessitate the fiery ordeal of the second death to extirpate its consequences. The outlines of thought that may be tentatively suggested appear to be the following.

1. First, we may most certainly conclude from this ministry of love to the spirits in prison the deathless endurance of personality, not as some fleeting, unsubstantial Divine essence to be withdrawn from the body and absorbed into the universal soul when we die, but as an enduring consciousness of individuality. Our Lord has accentuated that truth in His parable of Dives and Lazarus, in the words put into the mouth of Abraham: 'Son, remember.' It is as though the action of memory were the test of personality—memory, a full, free, unclouded memory, the flashing into the imprisoned soul which has entered into the eternal world of that intolerable light which makes all past present. And if it be so, and if we were capable of realizing the new intensity which the disembodied condition must assuredly confer upon all the senses and emotions, we should scarcely dare to sin. No words can adequately describe the torture that a remorseful memory will sometimes inflict on this side of the grave. A cruel, wicked deed, beyond human power to undo, will sometimes lie blistering on the memory like a living coal on the hand, burning and agonizing till it drives the victim at last into a suicide's grave. What, then, must be the power of such memories in the silence of the prison of the spirits? Let no man imagine that there is no process of remedial anguish beyond the grave for the soul that has formed its character only according to the natural self-life. The spirit that has been led captive by the flesh must be set free—'yet so as by fire.' That 'Son, remember' includes the age-long heart-ache of the spirit in prison. Well may the Lord speak of it as 'the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched'; inexorable, purifying love, dazzling and blinding the soul with the knowledge of what it is, searching it with the anguish of recognizing itself, not as God-condemned, but as self-condemned. And was it not from this terrible process of purgation that the conquering Redeemer delivered the souls of those who were drowned in the flood? The æon of discipline was over for them, the age of intellectual quickening, of intense incessant remembering, was past for them, and who can picture the scene of joy in that hospital of souls when the Redeemer came to strike off the fetters, to lead out into the light of a higher educative sphere the servants that had been beaten with the many stripes?

2. Secondly, we are justified in inferring from this ministry of mercy, this saving, 'yet so as through fire,' that death does not necessarily terminate the possibility of human restoration. Our present existence is only a brief stage in an endless human career, and faith in God, if it is truly to meet the needs of human nature, must always conceive of Him as possessing resources adequate to all possible emergencies. The objection urged against this interpretation, that it savours of the doctrine of Purgatory, is without the slightest foundation. That doctrine is repudiated not because it predicates the purification and development of the human spirit beyond the grave—that has always been the faith of the Church—but because, as stated in certain quarters, it is a mere engine of sacerdotalism, placing the key of the educative prison of spirits in the hands of the representatives of the Church on earth. And it is the very foundation of our peace, the basis of our larger hope, to know that the key is not in the hands of any man, or body of men, but in the Hand that was pierced on the cross. 'I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of

death and of Hades,' He said, and if the penitent's self-reproach, if the prodigal's cry, were possible to these men and women of the ancient world, these disembodied spirits who in their earth-life had allowed their higher nature to be conquered by their lower—if, as St. Peter said, the gospel was preached to them that were dead—if the Incarnation of the Divine Word, who in Gethsemane and on Calvary won the battle of humanity, carried His victory into the prison-house of His ruined brethren, who shall dare to deny the universal hope, who shall venture to look Omnipotence in the face and say, 'Death and Hades are too strong for Thee, and Thine arm is shortened; Thy love has grown cold; there can be no mercy beyond the grave'? Nay, rather let us lift up our hearts to the one universal Omnipotent Parent-Source in whom all live and move and have their being, and, in the light of this passage of Scripture that we are considering, say to Him, 'Father of humanity, Creator and Saviour of the world, we thank and bless Thee for the larger hope; our hearts sink within us when we think upon the countless myriads who have never known Thee here; we are consumed with sorrow when we consider the thousands in a Christian land born in an environment which is a curse and shame upon our civilization, steeped from their birth in hereditary shame and degradation, growing up under influences incapable of evoking a single God-like instinct, subject to no restraint, living prayerless lives and dying despairing deaths; we weep with grief and indignation when we think of the thousands annually sacrificed to the cursed idol of drink, whose worship is one long anthem of affliction; and we thank Thee, O God, for blessing us with the conviction that the present life does not exhaust Thy resources for educating Thy children. We know that our Redeemer liveth, that He holds the keys of Hades, and that

> As His death won life, His agony
> Shall set the shadowy world
> From sin and sorrow free.

3. And one further inference which may be legitimately drawn from the preaching scene of Hades is connected with the probable occupation of God-taught spirits when they pass out of the limitations of the flesh. Into the mysteries of that higher sphere, condition, place, dimension, whatever it is, named 'Heaven,' no human understanding can penetrate. Certain inferences, however, are required by reverence to God, and we may infer with something like certainty what it is not. Every noble mind turns with unconcealed disgust from all unreal conceptions of self-centred contemplation as the occupation there. It rejects with utter indignation those fiendish suggestions that the joy of the saved will be increased by a contemplation of the sufferings of the lost. If there be selfishness of that kind, it will not be good to be there. No, if in Christ we see our own transformation and God's ideal of human nature, when we consider that to Him the act of death was the opening of a grander, wider-reaching sphere of remedial missionary work, we may fairly infer what will be the occupation of souls among the mysterious mansions of the Father's house in the shadow world. If the future is to be the evolution, the perfection, of the present, if it is to be a perfected social state 'where labour is rest, and where each does for all what he alone does best,' can you imagine a servant of God and humanity working, praying, loving, reforming, saving souls up to the hour of his death, and then suddenly finding himself blunted, metamorphosed, callous, with no love for his brethren? Nay, rather you imagine every Divine instinct irradiated with new intensity, you realize the power of those words of Robert Buchanan:

> Were I a soul in heaven afar from pain,
> Yea, on Thy breast of snow,
> At the scream of one below
> I should scream again.

Of all the instincts by which man is possessed there is not one more powerful, more spontaneous, than the instinct of rescue. It is part of the Divine activity, directly hereditary from our Father; it is the essential attribute in the life of God which provided the motive for the Incarnation; it is the spontaneous heart-beat out of which spring humanity's

noblest deeds, witnessing in every shipwreck, in every fire, in every catastrophe, in every disaster. Is this Godlike instinct of rescue to be obliterated by passing into the spirit-world? Can you imagine a man, say, like St. Paul, or like John Wesley, or can you imagine a woman like Joan of Arc, or Florence Nightingale, in all the marvellous sensitiveness of the disembodied condition, satisfying their deepest, noblest instincts with endless Hallelujahs, not only content that others should be unsaved, but gaining satisfaction from the sufferings of the shipwrecked lives of the lost? No, surely the characteristics of that reign of Christ which is to last until He has brought all enemies under His feet will be the winning of souls that are undergoing the æonian remedial process, the preaching to the spirits in prison, who in the discipline of the great darkness are slowly learning to find the Divine embodied in their nature. Surely there are many thus occupied whom we have known and loved. Untrammelled by the flesh, freed from the limitations of bodily infirmity, in all the unwearied vigour of the spiritual body, they are carrying on the work pertaining to them as a royal priesthood. And then cometh the end—and what an end! Love triumphant, God vindicated, sin destroyed, tears wiped from all eyes, and the Father all and in all.![1]

Lo, you have wounds and you are speeding
fast!
The light is gone!
Have you no cloak to screen you from the
blast?
It is not well!

Show me the way to Hell:
I must pass on.

There is indeed hard by a little gate:
But there thou shalt not go.
Thou art too fair;
Golden thy hair doth blow.

There I must go:
I have an errand there for those that wait,
Have waited for me long.

I showed the gate.
Now is He shut within, and I am found
Alone with blood-stains on the ground.
Would I could go down to that dim
Murk of the shades to those that wait for
Him![1]

[1] B. Wilberforce.

The Longsuffering of God.

1 Pet. iii. 20.—'The longsuffering of God waited.'

The word 'longsuffering' which St. Peter here uses of God represents Him as we are not very apt to think of Him. It represents Him as having before Him, and bearing, all the evil in His children—their ingratitude, their disobedience, their folly, their fickleness, their obstinacy, their selfishness, their wilfulness, their sensuality, their irreverence, their vanity—the whole dark and diversified mass of their sin. The catalogue of its shapes and degrees is well-nigh inexhaustible, yet it does not exhaust His patience. In breadth and depth the guilt, even to our mortal eyes, seems insufferable, yet His long-suffering suffers it. He beholds, and yet He tolerates it all. The more closely we fix attention on this single character of God—His patience—the more wonderfully it will open before us the truth that He alone is worthy to be worshipped.

But let us give a little wider reach to the treatment of the subject by considering the patience of God in its sublime delay, its slowness as men count slowness—in bringing about the most beneficent ends.

1. He shows us this patience first as the Maker of things. You find it in the unhurried order of the natural creation; the slow building and furnishing of the outer worlds; the slow succession of geologic ages; the slow procession in ascending ranks, one only so little above another, of the races of plants and animals; the slow preparation of the planet for its final purpose, the revelation of the spiritual glory of the Divine Man in the flesh, and the manifestation, by that incarnation, of a new earth, with the sons of God for its kings and priests. When God would lay beds of solid rock as the pillars of a continent, making

[1] Michael Field, *Mystic Trees*, 32.

a thousand years as one day, He deposits them of the small sand, grain by grain. When He would fix the beams of His chambers in the waters, He chooses very rarely for mechanics the gigantic forces of earthquake or deluge, but He piles together countless legions of small skeletons till the coral masonry makes at last the mightiest architecture. When He would burnish and adorn some cavern with the splendour of crystals that outshine all the pictures of art and man's device, He drips into the dark gallery, drop by drop, for centuries, the waters that He holds in the hollow of His hand. He does not warm the air and earth at once by firebolts, but by silent sunbeams. He does not moisten the land by waterspouts and cataracts, but by beads of dew, night after night, making small the drops of rain, and sprinkling them upon the pastures patiently, from the Psalmist's days to ours. All the resources of omnipotence being for ever at His command, He moves forward the prosecution of His plan at an almost imperceptible rate. For there is a plan. It will not answer to suppose that the delay is owing to any indifference, or any uncertainty about the result. On all these vast periods are stamped plain signs of what He means to do at last. Traces of foreordained organs and uses are everywhere. Masters of science say they can find in the lowest and rudest forms of organized and living matter a type and prophecy of more to come, just as we see the full dispensation of the Second Adam foreshadowed in Genesis, and the Church of Christ prefigured in the tabernacle and worshippers of the wilderness. The slowness is not because there is no definite end to be worked out, but only because it is God, God who seeth that end from the distant beginning, God who waiteth, that is working it.

2. Rise from the physical to the moral world. Take the broadest divisions of the human family—races and nations. From their beginnings in the East, as an eastern shepherd leads out his flocks, the Everlasting Father has brought His tribes out of their native sheepcotes and stationed them here and there over the globe. Slowly they crept westward, in their pastoral or commercial or military migrations, from one line of valleys to another, along the rivers, around the shores of the Mediterranean, across southern deserts, up among the northern forests, through the gaps of mountains, sailing to islands, navigating oceans, colonizing and populating both the hemispheres. Sometimes the advancing wave was checked and thrown back a thousand years. Sometimes the pioneers halted in their march, and stood still for generations. Vast territories, with fertile soils and blooming vegetation, were waiting to receive them: and some are waiting still. God waited His own good time for occupying them with human industry. Nor is this the chief exercise of His patience. One after another these nations have broken away from their Creator's commandment. For each of them He kindled the light of conscience or of revelation, to show them the way, and they shut their eyes to it. Nations, one after another, have grown corrupt. No sooner have they come to prosperity than they have come to luxury, idleness, and the beginnings of decay. They have tempted and betrayed each other; cheated, fought, enslaved, murdered each other. The strong have oppressed the weak, the cunning over-reached the simple, the rich despised the poor, the poor hated and envied the rich. None of them has been permanently pure, just, and good—no, not one. Not one country but has been soaked with human blood; not one government but has had its convulsions and insurrections. And on all this long and horrible train of public sin and shame God has been looking down: Himself holy, just, and good; Himself the 'Author of peace and lover of concord'; Himself hating iniquity and delighting in mercy, in equity, in chastity, in truth and good-will. Very seldom has He come to them with sudden judgments or widespread desolations. He has waited till they would destroy themselves. He has tried them again and again. When one has gone down He has set up another, and waited patiently for that. Even the one people that He chose out of all the rest for His own, folding and guarding them, ransoming and saving them, bearing them as on an eagle's wings through

the wilderness, trying and proving them with gentle judgments to see what was in their hearts, even this darling Israel turned itself into the bitterest offence against Him. But His longsuffering waited, and waited not only in the days of Noah, as the text says, but waited through the age of the patriarchs, waited through the age of Moses, and of the judges, and of the kings, waited till the captivity, waited and brought them back after it, waited till 'the fulness of time,' waited till the voice of earlier and later prophets had died away, crying, 'All the day long did I stretch out my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people,' till one of the last of them had to confess, 'To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us.'

3. But we can bring the doctrine home much closer to our personal feelings than this. We all know well enough what those things are that try and irritate us in the common intercourse of life, and where our patience gives way. We know how great the provocation is, when our motives are misjudged, or our self-respect is insulted; when mean calculations take advantage of our friendship; when our children are forgetful or wilful, our pupils dull, our servants careless, our neighbours arrogant, our beneficiaries unthankful or impertinent. We all know the sting that hurts us in contempt, in estrangement, in forgetfulness. To be crowded upon by intrusion, or curiosity, or conceit; to be patronized; to be contradicted—these are some of the tests of our patience. Now, all these hateful things are known to God. They are full in His sight. Just so far as they are real offences at all, they are offences against Him before they are offences to us. He does not overlook them. There is no haughty indifference to little faults or little vexations with God. By as much as His Spirit is holier, intenser, perfect altogether in its sensitive and glorious purity, by just so much these little wrongs and transgressions hurt Him more keenly, and are aggravated in His sight. His sympathies, His abhorrence, His indignation are infinite; but so is His long-suffering. These particular annoyances and stupidities, these cruelties and negligences, these breaches of charity and decency, these meannesses, lusts, debaucheries, vanities—do you suppose that they are less really abominable to God than to us, even the best of us? He looks on and sees the weak injured, the innocent oppressed. Why does He not strike down the insolent libertine, and break to pieces the wicked system, and disperse to the four winds the banded sects of error and unbelief? He knows why—He waits. Never imagine one sin escapes Him. The cries of those that have reaped, while the pleasure-seekers have been wanton, have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Someone says, God is patient because He is eternal: and so we make excuses for our *im*patience. God is patient because He is good, as well as because He is strong and wise. He waits for men that they may return to Him. He spares them that they may spare each other. He forgives us for Christ's sake, that we may forgive one another, every one his brother's trespasses.

4. And then, if we could look far into the heart of God, might it not appear that He has—considering their light, their calling, their privileges and promises—quite as much occasion to let His patience have her perfect work in the inconstancies of Christians as in the crimes of unbelievers?—the cold affections, lifeless prayers, halting steps, the staying back from the heights of grand attainment on the part of those who have taken the vows and engagements of the Church, as well as the reckless wickedness of those who have refused them? He has to wait even for His own people that He has redeemed—the Bride that He has loved, the Church that He has purchased with His blood, in her backward and worldly living.

¶ What a miracle of patience God has been! Can we not enter into the spirit of that Spanish lady of whom Father Rho speaks, who said, 'That if she had to build a church in honour of the attributes of God, she would dedicate it to the Divine Patience?' [1]

[1] *The Spirit of Father Faber*, 148.

It is quite noticeable that one of the Apostles of our Lord dwells on this grace of patience with peculiar earnestness, returning to it as if it had come with a special power to his conscience and a special sacredness to his heart. St. Peter's was just one of those impressionable, impetuous temperaments—with great faults and great virtues—which lay a heavy tax upon the patience of friends, and yet inspire a lively interest. So he must have felt how repeatedly and bitterly he had tried that one Divine Friend who had called him to be a disciple, and had forgiven him again and again. Ardent, rash, vacillating,—starting in faith to walk on the waters, yet suddenly afraid and beginning to sink; ready to break his Master's law of love by smiting with the sword; interrupting with his refusal the calm and holy action when the Lord washed His followers' feet; denying thrice the Saviour that he loved after all, and was afterwards ready to die for—it is not strange that, as he looked back on his blotted record when he was growing old, he should enlarge with tender and grateful unction on this heavenly patience. No wonder he testified that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation, and rejoiced that with Him a thousand years are as one day. No wonder he unfolded that lofty ideal of Christian longsuffering where not only he that is buffeted for his faults but he that suffers for doing well takes it patiently, and strengthens his brethren with the promise that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Out of the deeps how often hath my cry
Gone up to God on the wild wings of prayer!
Even so often hath He deigned to hear;
So often hath He said—Thou shalt not die;
So often—Stand upon thy feet once more;
So often—Serve Me better than before.
But I, the river of my pain being past,
Slighted His Succour Who had borne me through,
Daily deferring the sweet service due,
Till seem'd that Mercy's self might scarce refrain
Her patient hands from vengeance at the last.
But Thee, still seeking Thy reluctant Sheep
'Mid thorny-tangled brakes that pierce Thee deep,
Iron ingratitude repels in vain.[1]

The Armour of the Cross.

1 Pet. iv. 1.—'Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind.'

The death of the Son of God seems to forbid all human prating about it: it is already in itself so great and wonderful that there is danger of its losing by attempts to show its greatness and wonder. The best thing we can do is to try to receive into our hearts the plain story in the Gospels. Simply, gravely, calmly the narrator goes forward; the very awfulness of the things told seems to bridle his lips. It is a warning against hoping to get good here by violent excitement, by stirring up our feelings unnaturally and lashing ourselves into fanciful horror. That is not the state of mind in which such images impress themselves most deeply. Rather it is in stillness and patient humility and in opening our hearts to all powers from above that we receive most surely the stamp of the Cross.

1. One thing especially strikes us in the story as told in the Gospels—the slightness and faintness of the allusions to bodily suffering. How great the suffering of such a death must have been, it hardly needs to tell. How was the suffering a thing of no consequence in that day's work? St. Peter again and again speaks of the sufferings of Christ. But neither he nor any evangelist draws out the particulars. St. John mentions the thirst that he may point out to us the fulfilment of an Old Testament prophecy. Otherwise we are left to imagine what the bodily anguish was. The anguish of mind is indeed revealed in one terrible cry. In the words of an old psalm He cried aloud: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' We notice the feeling of utter and entire loneliness, of being stripped of all that clung to Him on earth; and then, strangest of all, the feeling as if He were stripped of

[1] P. S. Worsley.

fellowship with the God in heaven whose Kingdom He came to make known. How such words could be uttered by One who was what He was, we cannot guess. But there they are, a most blessed memorial that Christ has gone before us even in that deepest, most miserable loneliness. No one henceforth can feel that, while striving to do right and serve God to the uttermost, he has really been left utterly alone to an impossible task. Christ was before him in that feeling, and that hour was the hour when victory was close at hand. But, above all, these words show the completeness of Christ's sacrifice, how He did indeed pour out soul as well as body unto death; how He kept back nothing from the destruction and anguish which came upon His whole human nature. All was freely, ungrudgingly given up. He emptied Himself of His heavenly fullness to the uttermost. Only the trusting, loving, obedient spirit remained in all its power. He was never so much Himself as when He refused to use any of His power to save Himself from pain and death.

That sacrifice was made once for all. Henceforth the nature of man has at its head One 'who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth'; One who, Himself free from all defilements, felt all defilements as His own; One who bore all earthly sufferings, such as the worst might deserve. The mere endurance would have little availed. God who willeth not the death of a sinner could never will the useless and purposeless misery of a sinner, much less of His own spotless Holy One. God is not one who delights in pain, but in His wise counsels the willingness to endure pain is needed for any great gift: it is the test, the trial, of a true and faithful spirit, and the giving up of the very life is the only way to find life.

2. And therefore the Cross of Christ is on the one hand the foundation of all our hopes, putting to scorn any proud dreams of ours that we have a right to claim God's favour for anything that we do. On the other, it lies at the foundation of all true Christian life and energy. By itself it might have no power over us; we might feel its nobleness and yet see in it only a failure of nobleness. But it is in truth the step towards the Resurrection, the step that sets to it the seal of triumph. We know now that no goodness is wasted, and no loss and suffering need be wasted. Beyond all, supporting all, embracing all, are the heavenliness of Christ and the suffering of Christ. His letting go all that flesh holds dear the moment it came in the way of His Divine work at once shows us how to prevail and gives us the needed strength. St. Peter well speaks of our 'arming ourselves' with Christ's mind, for without it we are weak and defenceless. The mind of Him who 'when he was reviled, reviled not again' supplies us with the stoutest armour and the most powerful weapons. Nothing can resist one who has learned to conquer himself, if only he is guided by obedience to God and love to man. On the one hand the Cross of Jesus is the everlasting token of the love of God; on the other it is the abiding memorial of His power, and the way in which He bestows His power upon men.

¶ The mind of Christ is the armour of His people. His mind, as He Himself discloses it, was ever directed toward the supremacy of the Will of God. In this spirit He came to earth: 'I came not to do Mine own will, but the Will of Him that sent Me.' In this spirit He actively engaged in the ministries of His life: 'I seek not Mine own will.' In this spirit He looked upon His work among men: 'My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me.' In this spirit He reconstructed for Himself the common relationships of life: 'Whosoever shall do the Will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.' In this spirit He repelled the last temptation of the soul: 'Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done.'

This is the 'mind' which likewise arms His people. They are surrounded by foes—some of which are the children of their own riotous past, and others the persistent influences of their now-forsaken allegiances; and the ultimate issue of every struggle is governed by their mental and moral attitude. Hence, to 'arm yourselves with the same mind' is the open secret of victory given to each one as the

struggle is joined. In other words—acknowledge by practical surrender and obedience the supremacy of God's Will! Move toward its fulfilment as the one thing in the world that is altogether desirable! Steer your course by no other than this Pole-star![1]

The Lusts of Men and the Will of God.

1 Pet. iv. 2.—'Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind. . .). That ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men but to the will of God.'

St. Peter dearly loved a contrast. It has often been remarked how easily his style lends itself to an antithesis: he defines by negation and by affirmation in one breath. As he hurries to tell us what a thing is his most characteristic stepping-stone is to tell us what it is not. 'Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but the hidden man of the heart.' Or again, 'Baptism . . . not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the enquiry of a good conscience after God.' Once more his love of contrast leaps to light in his eagerness to state the meaning and bearings of the new life: 'that yé (RV, the true reading) no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men but to the will of God.' That was the greatest moral contrast the world had ever seen, and the amazement of it was this, that it was not a mere contrast of ideals or of possibilities: it was turning itself into history before the eyes of men, as believing souls answered the challenge of their high calling and received the fullness of the grace of Christ. The readers of the letter had at least begun to enter into the experience: the Apostle would confirm and establish them, and he has three things by which to make his appeal—an example, a memory, and the glory of the Master's reproach.

1. *An example.*—He touches first on the example of the Master: 'Christ suffered in the flesh.' His thought is obviously linking itself up with iii. 18, 'Christ also hath once suffered for sins.' His mind has been on a digression into the apocalyptic mysteries of the unseen; now he returns to the track that he left. Over these men and women, on the brink of untold suffering for righteousness' sake, he holds high the example of Him who was Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. He is God's plea to all men so circumstanced that they should arm themselves with the same mind. So St. Peter fuses into one phrase two great Pauline thoughts—'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,' and 'Put on the whole armour of God.' It is a curious paradox of experience that the mightiest armour is the inward armour. When a nation is called upon to defend its rights and liberties, or the rights and liberties of others trampled upon by tyrants, powerful and needful though armies and fleets may be, the greatest asset of all is the inward sense of the justice of the cause; and history in its slow and gradual way, taking it as a whole, confirms the doctrine of the supremacy of the moral over the material. The individual sometimes feels the same thing in himself: 'thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just.' St. Peter has already enlarged on the boldness of a good conscience. And here was armour that Roman spears would not be able to pierce or flames of persecution to consume: 'arm yourselves with the same mind.'

2. *A memory.*—But since these Christians were but on their way to their victory, and were still subject to all manner of temptations to pride, to short-lived zeal, to compromise with evil, it was fitting that they should sometimes look back to the rock whence they were hewn and to the hole of the pit from which they were digged. So the Apostle brings memory to reinforce example, the remembrance of their former living to add a plea to the high pattern of their Lord: 'That ye no longer should live the rest of your time in the flesh to the lusts of men but to the will of God.' That 'no longer' hints at stores of memory which are also stores of warning. And its meaning is unfolded in the words that follow:

[1] J. S. Holden, *Chapter by Chapter Through the Bible*, 266.

'For the time past may suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles, and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibbings, revellings, carousings and abominable idolatries.' This is the chief evidence that the readers of the letter were largely if not exclusively Gentile, though quite possibly some Jews fell almost as low as the licentious and earth-bound paganism by which they were surrounded. Newman as a young man wrote to his mother that often, even in his gayest moments, he shuddered at himself; and these men too might sometimes shudder at themselves and their own possibilities when they remembered the abyss from which they had been redeemed and how near it still lay to their feet.

3. *The glory of the Master's reproach.*—Moreover, they saw all around them hard faces and suspicious eyes. 'They think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, blasphemers that they are!' *They think it strange!* so the fortresses of conventionality level their guns against the adventurers of the Kingdom of Heaven and the great god of things-as-they-are weaves his spells and snares for pilgrim feet. There is no stronger temptation than that which is built out of these two facts—that our neighbours desire to have us like them, and that we naturally desire to be like our neighbours. When quickened souls break through that temptation, men's faces harden and their tongues begin to wag. That was why Vanity Fair was in a hubbub about Christian and Faithful. 'The pilgrims were clothed with such kind of raiment as was diverse from the raiment of any that traded in that fair. The people therefore of the fair made a great gazing upon them. . . . And as they wondered at their apparel, so they did likewise at their speech, for few could understand what they said: they naturally spoke the language of Canaan, but they that kept the fair were the men of this world: so that, from one end of the fair to the other, they seemed barbarians each to the other.' How often that essential situation has been repeated from St. Peter's day to our own! The first Christians were 'enemies of the human race.' The Reformers and Puritans knew what it meant to be strange to their own people. Those who in India break caste by becoming Christians lose all that they may win Christ and be found in Him. 'They think it strange'; but for the Christian the supreme question is not what men think but what He thinks who is Lord of all and who is 'ready to judge both the quick and the dead.' He thinks the true thought. He speaks the last word. We must be 'ambitious,' as St. Paul said, 'to be well-pleasing unto him.'[1]

¶ Blessed are they that are persecuted not only in a great cause, not only in the martyrdom of death, but for the sake of living a good life, for the sake of fulfilling Christian duty, for the sake of being true to an enlightened conscience.

So, he died for his faith. That is fine—
    More than most of us do.
But, stay, can you add to that line
    That he lived for it, too!

It is easy to die. Men have died
    For a wish or a whim,
From bravado or passion or pride.
    Was it harder for him?

But, to live: every day to live out
    All the truth that he dreamt
While his friends met his conduct with doubt
    And the world with contempt.

Was it thus that he plodded ahead,
    Never turning aside?
Then, we'll talk of the life that he lived,
    Never mind how he died.[2]

Revellings.

1 Pet. iv. 3.—'Excess of wine, revellings, banquetings.'

THE middle one of these three words is the Greek word *Comus*, and the Greek word *Comus* was taken by Milton and personified as the spirit of revelry and fleshly indulgence, the tempter of youth. In that beautiful and won-

[1] J. M. E. Ross.
[2] M. Devine, *The Religion of the Beatitudes*, 152.

derful poem—which it would be well if every one of us knew from beginning to end, because we ought all to understand the glamour with which *Comus* is invested—Milton represents him, when he first comes before us with all the rout of the creatures that he has ruined, holding in his hand a charming rod and the cup of his seductive poison. There is a kind of magic about him. He speaks to the young, not stating what he intends to do with them—if he did, very few would listen to him—but with specious words, with witching poetry, and even with a show of philosophical reasoning. No one can speak more tenderly or more sweetly than he. No one seems more in touch with all that is beautiful in Nature and all that is gay and festive in human life. In keeping with all this, the first lines which Milton puts into the lips of *Comus* are among the loveliest in the English language. *Comus* begins:—

The star that bids the shepherd fold
Now the top of heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream;
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the East.
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigour now is gone to bed;
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sour Severity,
With their grave saws in slumber lie.
We, that are of purer fire,
Imitate the starry quire,
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
Lead in swift round the months and years.

In all probability the great majority of those unhappy creatures who, as the victims of revelry and drink, make their abode in the hells of the lowest part of our great cities, entered upon the courses which ruined them just in the spirit described in these lines. They felt that they were of 'purer fire,' and they looked with a kind of scorn upon those dull, unsensitive natures that seemed unconscious of the cravings that were working in them. The Tempter who approached them spoke to them in a rapture of poetry, seemed to introduce them to the invisible powers of Joy, and Genius, and Song, allying them to the 'starry quire,' the joyous spirit of all the ages; and the cup which was held out to them was not the vulgar cup of intoxication, but the charmed chalice of *Comus*.

Now, in this passage the Apostle Peter speaks of all these things, 'lasciviousness, lusts, excess of winebibbing, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries,' as the desire of the Gentiles—or, to put it in a phrase which is more familiar to us, the way of the world.

And this was the way of the world as far back as the records of civilization go. In the regal palaces of Babylon, in the imperial palaces of Rome, precisely the same spirit presided, precisely the same spell was woven which we see to-day in the halls and saloons of Paris and London. In England there is this difference—*Comus* has become quite respectable. He has entered into trade, and he calls his business, with some show of reason, The Trade of the country. He has vast vested interests, and with exceeding ingenuity he is trying to get us all interested in a pecuniary way in his undertakings. While he ruins our sons and daughters, he proposes to put part of the price into our own pocket.

There are literally thousands of young men who are being destroyed by him every year in London alone. The lads come up from their quiet and peaceful homes, where they have shown in early days certain inclinations to goodness, and they are entered at the Hospitals, or at the Inns of Court, or in some business house. And very soon a change comes over them, perceptible enough to those who watch them. The truth is that they have been introduced to *Comus;* they have come under his spell. They went into his clubs, his saloons, with their brilliant gilding, their music, their dance, their cards, and their

drink. And when they first went in they were a little shocked; it was so unlike what they remembered at home. But they got over it and yielded quickly to the glamour. They began to feel that they were seeing the world —yes, and the flesh and the devil too, if they only knew it. And very soon the mother at home, with her anxious eyes, began to notice the difference, and she put questions timidly, which were answered with irritable evasion. But it was part of the new-found manhood no longer to be tied to the mother's apron-strings, or to shrink from such a trifle as breaking her heart. The father ventured to say something severe, but that went for nothing—it was what might be expected from strict Age and sour Severity; and so the process went on. *Comus* with infinite skill takes care that it shall last longer in some cases than in others. In some cases it is soon over. The young man has to find money wherewith to pay his gambling debts, and gets into disgrace in consequence. In other cases it is very slow; it is protracted with a kind of splendid and tawdry tinsel up to the end of manhood. But in every case the victim is finally brought into the rout of *Comus*, which Milton describes in these words: —'Monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistening.' Only their apparel!

Now, the main instrument by which they are ruined is, as St. Peter calls it, 'wine bibbings and carousings,' or, as we put it more simply to-day—'drink.' If you wish for any proof that drink is a malign power working against the safety and the peace of man, you will surely see it in the facts which are before your eyes in England. Here is the greatest—some people think the noblest—of all the nations of Europe, with certainly an historical record which ought to make every Englishman proud to bear an honoured name. And this great nation is shamed in the eyes of the world. In many parts it is almost a presumption that if men are English they will be drunkards, and that they will be carrying their baneful and polluted habits into districts and countries where sobriety has hitherto reigned. Here is a country, one of the richest, and in some respects the richest country in all the world, and it has in its very centre a gangrene of degrading poverty which is almost entirely the creation of drink. Why? Because the drink system is just an ingenious way by which the greater part of the wages of labour can be drawn back again into the hands of the capitalist. Here is a country which is inhabited not by savages, but by men and women singularly tender-hearted, without any natural tendencies to cruelty, without any over-mastering passions like those of Southern peoples. The English people, though it seems sometimes to be forgotten, are a merciful race—a just, a chivalrous race. And yet here, day by day, are perpetrated crimes of indescibable horror and bestiality which are almost all of them the product of drink. And here are good and honest men actually giving their strength and their time and their money to perpetuate the means of their country's ruin, and sometimes contributing the results of their toil to religious and philanthropic objects. And, lastly, here are the young people themselves. As they go into the very places of ruin they see standing at the doors the men who have been ruined by this particular temptation; they have to press between these victims in order to satisfy their own appetite; and yet they are so blinded and bewitched by the magician *Comus* that they never think that they themselves will probably one day be standing at the door of the same place in rags, polluted and fallen, lost to society and to God.[1]

¶ The liquor-factors and their allies and victims cost Great Britain, in various ways, a million pounds sterling every day of the year (excepting Sunday). The drink trade has its hand in all the other evils that afflict our race, manufacturing most of the crime, most of the insanity, most of the misery and pauperism, and catering for and drugging the captives of vice. It is the most prolific mother of moral, physical, and domestic ruin. Mr. Charles Booth, one of the true public souls entitled to speak, speaks of 'drink in all its combinations adding to every trouble, undermining every effort after good, destroying the home and cursing the lives of young children.' Its producers and merchants may be generous and

[1] R. F. Horton.

kind in other directions, and may plead that they only supply a public want. Yet do they never see in visions of the night, do they never see like moving designs on the table-cloth on which their viands stand, a procession of men and women and young people passing in and out of the swing-doors on the sordid way from the drink-bar to broken homes, shame, misery, the den of vice, the workhouse, the gaol, and the grave?

They, with their expenditure exceeding the whole national revenue, with their powerful trade organisation and their strong representation in parliaments, are dictators to the legislature and will master the nation if the nation fails to master them. Private vested interests—which blind their moral vision—override their human instincts and all consideration of the commonweal. 'Vested interests!' Are not human beings, homes, purity, health, national character the supreme vested interests dear to every public soul and entitled to outweigh all private or trade interests? Yet it is not they themselves that stand alone responsible for this menace to the public liberties; it is apathetic public opinion. The citizens could, at least, mitigate the evil if they had civic conscience and Christian enthusiasms. It is, in Mr. H. G. Wells' phrase, 'simply the worst devil of all—moral apathy.'[1]

Crises.

1 Pet. iv. 7.—'But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.'

This is a text which, like many others in the New Testament, is laden with the sense of crisis. An hour is upon us—so it seems to say—which may well solemnize and sober us: an hour to make men nobly serious; a time not for dalliance or light-hearted folly, but for earnest thought and prayer. And this, because 'the end of all things is at hand.'

What did the Apostle mean? Did he share the belief, held by some of the early Christians, that the world was destined before long to come to a sudden end, to perish in some great catastrophe? If so, he plainly, in that matter, misunderstood the teaching of his Master and failed to grasp the width and wonder of the purpose of God. It may be that he is only expressing in a vivid way his presentiment that great changes are afoot, that the order of things with which he and his fellow-Christians are familiar is passing away, that they have been called, therefore, to witness for God in a great and fateful time. Living in a day of destiny, witnessing the passing of an age and the birth-hour of a new epoch, they are called to conduct corresponding to the quality of the crisis and calculated to be helpful in all the best ways to the fulfilment of the Divine plan and purpose for the children of men.

This may be all that St. Peter means. If he meant more, he certainly failed to take a sufficiently long view. If he allowed himself to anticipate an imminent end of the world he must have forgotten a few things, and among them this, that his Master had issued a warning against that very error and had given a true and far more helpful and inspiring reading of the troubles and disturbances of the terrible time which He also felt was most surely and swiftly coming. 'Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled; for the end is not yet.' 'The gospel must first be preached to all nations.' 'These things are the beginning of travail.' That was what the Master Himself said about it. 'The beginning of travail.' The happenings were not the convulsions of a dying world, but the birth-pangs of a new era, the ushering in of a new order of things.

It was when Christ explained this to the disciples of that earlier day in their time of trial, when He declared that they were witnessing not an end, but a great new beginning, that He added, 'But take heed to *yourselves*.' It was the one thing to say; and we men and women of to-day have great need to take heed to ourselves. If we are called to take a hand in the making of a new time, then right thought and right conduct become a matter of infinite moment. For new epochs are not made mechanically or from without, but in the souls of the men and women of the generation that ushers them in. And whether the thought

[1] R. E. Welsh, *Man to Man*, 239.

and purpose of God are to be realized in any generation will depend on whether the men and women of that generation are ready to grasp these thoughts and purposes and to put heart and mind and will at the disposal of the Spirit of God for their realization. That is why these early Christians had need, why we have need, to be serious and to be sober and to watch unto prayer.

Here, then, are the directions how we should bear ourselves.

1. First, we are to *be sober*, that is, serious and earnest. Not gloomy or despondent; for out of gloom and despondency no great things come. Rather we are called to faith and courage and hopefulness; to count it high honour to have our part to play when great things are afoot.

2. Let us also accept the invitation to *watch*. To watch as the sentry does against surprise and sudden danger, lest the enemy of the souls of men take us unawares. Watch, for the new age is at the door. Be alert and expectant, for a great day of the Son of Man draws nigh. And let the watch be *unto prayer*, not resting in the human only, but calling in the Divine: blending our wills with the living Will that is energizing at the heart of the Universe and seeking to find entrance into, and a channel of expression through, our yielded minds and hearts.

¶ With fine insight one of our great captains of industry said that 'there are problems in the spiritual and social world which are like some of our metals: altogether refractory to low temperatures. They will only melt with great heat and there is no other possibility of melting them.' They will not yield merely to 'the coldness of intellectual power, although intellectual power may be a tool, an instrument in the hands of the spiritual life.' From this William Denny drew the conclusion that past failures, instead of discouraging us, should but draw us to the feet of God. They should indeed, and also teach us to take with us there, not only individual cares and anxieties, but also the great problems and political issues on which so much of the happiness of the world depends. These big things must cease to be the sport of professional politicians and diplomatists. They must be the living concern of all of us. 'Pity to men and duty to Christ alike require the members of a modern State to be *political*'—let us trust, in a nobler sense than the word has sometimes borne. Christian people have a citizenship on earth as well as in heaven, and there is need to call in by faith and prayer help from that higher world. We need the high temperature for the refractory metals. And without prayer—earnest, believing, importunate prayer—the temperature will not come.[1]

Sober Prayer and Fervent Love.

1 Pet. iv. 7.—'But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer.'

THESE counsels are needful yet, and provide a safe and healthful path even to the end, come that end late or soon. Sober prayerfulness, fervent love, generous stewardship—these are the counsels, and they have validity not for an hour but to the last syllable of recorded time. Let us then try to unfold these timeless counsels that bridge the gulf between us and the dateless Date.

1. The first is the counsel to *a sober prayerfulness*. 'Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer.' Surely here is an echo of the Master's own parting message to His loyal servants: 'Take ye heed, watch and pray.' If we want to know the type of prayer which suits the vigil of the Church, it is already given us in the Lord's Prayer: 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' If we want to know the type of spirit that should lie behind the prayer, it is the spirit that rigorously girds the loins for service and faithfully tends the lamp of expectation. Prayer, in that spirit, is a great corrective of a shallow, limited, local view of life: it is a real ingredient in the equipment of a sound mind. For a sound mind must see the universe whole, and if we have not learned to

[1] C. Allan.

look as such souls look and to believe as they believe, we see but half the universe, and that the smaller half; not the regnant half, not the increasing half, not the half that holds the clue to the whole. We look, then, beyond this present hour and the set of circumstances which hems us round, to Him whose is the kingdom, the power, and the glory: our expectation is from Him and in His word do we hope.

> The sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
> Is—the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,

says Browning, speaking of the virtuous as much as of the vicious. Our hope is that He who has set us to the vigil will give us grace to fulfil it, so that, be His coming soon or late, in the mysteries of death or in the experience of life and history, we may be ready for His appearing.

2. With sober prayerfulness goes *fervent love*. 'Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves.' The healing shadow of the New Commandment falls here, as it does so often in the writings of St. Paul and St. John: indeed in this letter itself we are never far away from it—the fellowship of the new Israel is a great reality in which the Apostle's heart delights and in which he would have his readers find abundant comfort and cheer. But here there are two special notes in the message.

(1) One lies in the phrase adapted from the Book of Proverbs: 'love shall cover a multitude of sins.' It is pushing this idea a little too far to find, as some do, in brotherly love 'a kind of secondary atonement.' The conception is more ethical than theological: the Apostle is thinking of the life of the Church and not of the relations between man and God. Leighton catches the meaning and the music: 'What do they think who are still picking at every appearing infirmity of their brethren? Know they not that the frailties that cleave to the saints of God while they are here do stand in need of, and call for, this mutual office of love, to cover and pass them by? Who is there that stands not in need of this? If none, why are there any who deny it to others?' It is only by this generous and charitable spirit, willing to make allowance, reluctant to drag the faults of brethren into the light of day, that the holy fellowship can be kept together; and it is peculiarly becoming, the absence of it would be peculiarly shameful, in those who were all alike waiting for the coming of their Lord and Judge.

¶ If one reads the Gospel, one finds there is a good deal about loving other people and supplying their needs, but there is very little indeed about the duty of finding fault or lecturing them or improving them. There is a blessing on the pure-hearted and on the peacemaker, there is no beatitude for the reprover and for the rebuker. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the father is, of course, the hero of the story. It is a pity that the parable was ever called the Prodigal Son, because he is quite a subsidiary character, and his motives for repentance are frankly deplorable. But the father has not a word of blame for the offender: the poor wretch has been punished enough, and the father leaves it there; he does not rub in the heavy lessons of experience, or even express a hope of seeing a real amendment. Without blame, without question, without exhortation, he takes the unhappy creature back to his heart, and bids the minstrels do their best to cheer the simple feast. The only person who expresses perfectly just and natural indignation is the elder brother, and even for him, ungracious and detestable as he is, the father has no word of blame. He only begs him to banish all thoughts except a natural and kindly joy. The secret of the parable is that by loving people through thick and thin, if one can, the real victories are won; and that the only improvement, the only regeneration which is worth anything, comes that way.[1]

(2) The second special note is contained in the reference to hospitality, a custom which was not only a beautiful sign of Christian love but an essential element in the working of the early Church. There was a peripatetic ministry; inns were few. It was essential that the Christian messengers should be welcomed and entertained. The Third Epistle

[1] A. C. Benson, *Along the Road*, 158.

of John gives a brief but most vivid glimpse of such a messenger going forth 'for the sake of the Name,' and being welcomed, entertained and helped on his way for the same Name's sake. Here St. Peter bids his readers 'use hospitality one to another without grudging.' Had anybody been grumbling? The practice of hospitality was very beautiful but it had its difficulties. There is early evidence that some of the travelling preachers were spoiled. They presumed upon their privileges. In the second century it had to be announced that such a preacher was not to stay in one house more than two or three days. 'If he wishes to settle down . . . and will not work, he makes gain of his Christianity.' Love, then, had its risks in those days as in our own. This very problem remains perhaps the most difficult puzzle of Christian ethics—how to give without encouraging people to grab. Yet in facing the difficulty and trying to solve it lies a part, and a large part, of that love which we owe to our fellows: the love which will not merely toss an easy copper but will try to get at the roots of need, and help wisely as well as generously—that surely is the ideal which experience teaches us to aim at; because it is the harder task, it wears the fairer crown.

¶ Of Archbishop Whately it is said:—'The indiscriminate charity which is so common he never practised, and strongly disapproved of. He was in the habit of saying, 'Whatever you pay a man to do, that he will do; if you pay him to work he will work, and if you pay him to beg he will beg.' 'I have given away,' he said, '£40,000 since I came to Dublin, but I thank God I never gave a penny to a beggar in the street.' Giving to street-beggars he regarded as simply paying a number of wretched beings to live in idleness and filth, and to neglect and ill-treat the miserable children whose sufferings too often form part of their stock-in-trade. On the other hand, when cases of real need came under his notice, he would give lavishly for their relief. Often out of his own pocket he provided poor or over-worked clergymen with the means of paying curates, or with money enabling them to get rest and change. He saved nothing out of the larger income of the archbishopric, and died none the richer for having held it.' [1]

Love Covering Sin.

1 Pet. iv. 8.—'Love covereth a multitude of sins.'

THE source whence these words are taken is Prov. x. 12, 'Hatred stirreth up strifes, but love covereth all transgressions.' The expression 'cover a multitude of sins' occurs again as the closing words of the Epistle of James (v. 20): 'He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.' The form in which St. Peter and St. James present the saying differs slightly from the original Hebrew, and still more markedly from the *Septuagint*, and this suggests that we have here not a conscious quotation from the Book of Proverbs, but a saying in common use taken from an independent Greek translation of a text differing slightly from that of the *Masora*.

We need not spend time in refuting a common misunderstanding of the AV rendering in St. Peter,—'charity shall cover the multitude of sins'—as though it meant that amiability compensates for a great many moral shortcomings; though it is fair to say that the future tense 'shall cover' for 'covereth,' read in the Received Text, which comes from St. James, rather favours this false exegesis.

Again, it is sufficient to mention, without elaborate refutation, a wrong turn that has been given to the passage just cited from St. James, 'He which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.' This has been thought by some to mean that the merit gained by the conversion of a sinner will, in the Day of Judgment, outweigh the discredit due for a multitude of sins committed by the converter. We are not now concerned immediately with the passage in St. James; but a brief consideration of the expression 'to cover sins,' as there used, will help us to a right understanding of the saying in St. Peter, 'Love covereth a multitude of sins.'

[1] J. Forbes Moncrieff, *Our Giving*, 102.

The commonest Hebrew word for 'to atone for' sin, or 'pacify,' or 'propitiate,' means literally 'to cover over,' *kipper* (hence *kopher*, a ransom; *kapporeth*, propitiatory, mercy-seat). The following passages illustrate this use of the verb: Nehemiah (iv. 5) prays against the enemies of Israel, 'Cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee'; the Psalmist says, 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered' (Ps. xxxii. 1); and again, 'Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sins' (Ps. lxxxv. 2). And there are many places in which man is said to 'cover over' the sins of others by providing an atonement for them, though the English Versions naturally avoid in these cases a literal translation of the Hebrew term. We have, then, in St. James, the consequence of the conversion of a sinner presented in two aspects, the particular and the general: the soul of the individual sinner is saved, and there is at the same time a demonstration of the working in the moral sphere, through the agency of the converter, of that power which covers over a multitude of sins; and that power is love.

1. Now we should interpret these passages of the New Testament, especially the text from St. Peter, in the light of what we know about the operation of love, God's cosmic moral force, which works with most intense power in the Church of Christ, which God now uses to check the growth of sin, and which will finally eliminate evil altogether from the universe. It is always best to take large views, to look at things in relation to the whole of which they are a part; and it is allowable, as it is certainly practically helpful, to think of the 'multitude of sins,' of which the Apostles James and Peter speak, not as the sins of any particular person or persons, but as the volume or mass of sin in general, 'the sin of the world' which 'the Lamb of God taketh away.'

2. But we must, of course, take note in the first place of the working of the force of love in detail. 'Love,' says the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xiii. 5), 'taketh not account of evil.' That is to say, a man who puts himself under the control of the love of God acts, when a private personal injury has been done to him, as though nothing had occurred. In this way, by simply ignoring the unkind act or the insulting word, he does not merely conceal from view something that is there all the time, as we put a screen or curtain to hide what we do not wish seen, but he brings the evil thing to an end; it dies and leaves no seed. 'Hatred,' as the Wise Man says, 'stirreth up strifes'; because hatred is like one of those germs familiar to pathologists, which, in a favourable environment, propagate themselves a millionfold in an incredibly short space of time. 'Love covereth transgressions,' not so much by the act of ignoring them as by the result of ignoring them, the consequent cutting away from the transgression all that would nourish it, and enable it to live, and be fruitful and multiply; love makes an end of transgression much in the same way as sunshine destroys the germs of disease. Thus evil is overcome by good. The class of sin which is most obviously overcome by love is peculiarly of the self-propagating kind.

¶ At Kew Gardens, among the striking pictures of Miss North is one representing a fig tree which has nearly strangled a poison tree, in a fork of whose branches it started life as a seeding epiphyte. It soon grew apace, and sent down many roots to the earth, where they obtained food and grew in size, finally enclosing and crushing the trunk of the nurse-tree. So evil is to be overcome by the good. We must seek to master evil by beauty, love, and righteousness, as God does.[1]

3. We can now see that St. James, in the closing words of his Epistle, holds out as an incentive to efforts for the conversion of a sinner, that the man who succeeds in effecting this not only saves alive the soul of another, but also helps forward the accomplishment of the great cosmic purpose of God, by diminishing, ever so little, the sum total of evil. Nay, the experience of the Christian centuries assures us that the conversion of a sinner

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Gates of Dawn*, 155.

transmutes, by a Divine alchemy, that which is evil, and a source of evil, into a source of good. John Newton, the slave-dealer, becomes John Newton, the evangelist and hymn writer. The context in St. Peter is even more plainly favourable to this large, almost cosmic, reference of the saying. The Apostle is urging upon the Christian society the duty of self-preparation—the preparation of the Church by itself—for the Second Coming of Christ: 'But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer: above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins; using hospitality one to another without murmuring; according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves.' The notion of mutual help is here very emphatically reiterated—'among yourselves . . . one to another . . . among yourselves.' The love here spoken of, like the exercise of hospitality and the general use of spiritual gifts, affects the common life of the Church, her self-education, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, for the fuller life in Christ which will be hers. And so, 'the common salvation,' as St. Jude terms it, is worked out not merely by the salvation of souls one by one, but by each Christian taking his part, co-operating with Christ in His age-long purpose of 'presenting the church to himself a glorious church, not having a spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but . . . holy and without blemish.'

¶ Love is willing to forget as well as to forgive! Love does not keep hinting at past failures and past revolts. Love is willing to hide them in a nameless grave. When a man whose life has been stained and blackened by 'a multitude of sins' turns over a new leaf, love will never hint at the old leaf, but will rather seek to cover it in deep and healing oblivion. Love is so busy unveiling the promises and allurements of the morrow, that she has little time, and still less desire, to stir up the choking dust on the blasted and desolate fields of yesterday. 'Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners.' There's a 'cover' for you! 'And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew . . . stood at his feet behind him weeping!' There's a cover for you! 'The Son of man is come to save that which was lost.' There's a cover for you! We do not wonder that the great evangelical prophet of the Old Testament, in heralding the advent of the Saviour, should proclaim Him as 'a hiding place from the wind, and *a covert* from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' 'Love covereth all things.'[1]

¶ 'Dear Moss,' said the thatch on an old ruin, 'I am so worn, so patched, so ragged, really I am quite unsightly. I wish you would come and cheer me up a little. You will hide all my infirmities and defects; and through your loving sympathy no finger of contempt or dislike will be pointed at me.'

'I come,' said the moss; and it crept up and around, and in and out, till every flaw was hidden, and all was smooth and fair. Presently the sun shone out, and the old thatch looked bright and fair, a picture of rare beauty, in the golden rays.

'How beautiful the thatch looks!' cried one who saw it. 'How beautiful the thatch looks!' said another. 'Ah!' said the old thatch, 'rather let them say, "How beautiful is the loving moss!" For it spends itself in covering up all my faults, keeping the knowledge of them all to herself, and by her own grace making my age and poverty wear the garb of youth and luxuriance'.[2]

May I reach
That purest heaven,—be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony!—
Enkindle generous ardour,—feed pure love,—
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty,—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense!
So shall I join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world![3]

[1] J. H. Jowett.
[2] J. R. Miller, *The Glory of the Commonplace*, 169.
[3] George Eliot.

Individual Service.

1 Pet. iv. 10.—'As every man hath received a gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.'

Such is the Apostle's rule, or rather God's rule given through His Apostle, of the way in which we are to use what God has given us; the rule of mutual service, by means of, and in proportion to, the power which God has given us to help one another. And of course the rule holds good of all the actions of our lives. Whatever we have, whatever we can do, is God's free gift to us, is God's talent committed to our stewardship—to take care of and use for the Master's service, and for our brethren's good.

1. And, first, it is quite clear that St. Peter has a very strong sense of the meaning and value of individuality. Each man is in himself a little world not to be confounded with other little worlds about him. The very injunction of the verse is cast in the form of an appeal to the individual Societies, systems, corporations, nations. All the forms under which men are dealt with as a body, dealt with in the great aggregate, are, after all, only secondary; the prime fact of human life is man as he stands alone, man as he thinks for himself, as he chooses for himself, as he lives in himself. Humanity in the mass can be only what it is in the individual, humanity in the mass can only be moved through the individual, changed through the individual, saved through the individual. This is a great Christian message. Our Master came into a world in which men were making idols of systems, and societies, and corporations, idols to whose cruel whims they were sacrificing the freedom and the true interest of the individual. Salvation, whether of body or of soul, was thought of as assured only by the way of submission to an external system with conditions which fettered and cramped the individual, a system determined by past tradition, and inconsiderate of change, of variety, and of the movement of life. Jesus, on the contrary, insisted upon the supreme value of the individual; to Him the one lost sheep was everything; every sheep, in His view, had his own individual and peculiar name, because of his own individual and peculiar nature. In order to enter into His Kingdom, a man must tread a narrow way and pass through a strait gate; nay, he must, first of all, possess the Kingdom within himself as a spiritual force, before he could recognize it without him as an external embodiment. No one could come to Jesus, unless the Father drew him, unless the individual soul had come into a personal relation with God, a personal relation unshared by others, perhaps unsuspected by others, into which, at any rate, no third party dared intrude.

Surely this aspect of things is one which we are at times tempted to forget. In moments of weakness, of weariness, of disappointment, we crave to be dealt with in the aggregate; we long to lose our individuality and to become little pieces in an immense machine, forced to go, or stop, or slacken speed, or even wear out or break down entirely, by the compulsion of laws, laws of society, sometimes mere material laws, over which we would have no control. Salvation by laws, and systems, and corporations, of one kind or another, *does* offer to us, in certain moods, an easy way out of the difficulties of life. And yet, on the other hand, this individual life of ours, which stands so apart, brings with it certain glories which we would not, surely, lose.

(1) To begin with, all the rich variety of life belongs to individuality. Each man possesses, not *the* gift of grace, but just *a* gift of grace, and that his own. And the gift of each is his own and no other's, just because he is an individual, and thus apart from his fellows. Each has his own word of consolation or exhortation to speak, each has his own message to give, his own picture to paint, his own song to sing; and in being thus true to himself he is being true to God. He is reflecting just that little ray of the Divine life which he is intended to reflect. This, surely, is important; so much of our usefulness in the world depends upon our being just ourselves at our best; each one even 'as he hath received a gift,' thus is he to minister.

(2) Nor, again, can there be any strong sense of responsibility where the sense of individuality is weak. A man is less responsible for what he only shares with other men than for what he alone possesses. Once let us allow our thoughts to dwell exclusively, even chiefly, upon a great system, whether spiritual or material, which has absorbed us and is dealing with us for its own purposes, and we get to think of very little as being left for us to do ourselves. All the management of self, all the discipline of self, all the development of self, becomes, as it were, delegated away, and men shift in such a case the blame for failure, or, perhaps, flatter themselves into a false humility which is worse than pride. If we really care for the individual manhood with which we are endowed, we shall not try to lose ourselves in a crowd; we shall feel that one great glory of man is that he is subject to judgment, not hereafter merely, but now; we shall see that the very character of his freedom is the certainty that he must stand at the bar of God, that he must give account, as the ancient hymn runs, 'concerning his *own* deeds'; and we shall feel glad to remind ourselves of the Divine estimate in the old phrase, 'Thou God seest me.'

¶ In endeavouring to confirm my hold of a personal relation between God and man, and of His personal dealings with man, I find myself helped by realizing my own personal individuality. I belong to a race and nature comprehending all human beings, yet I feel myself to be different from them all, and to require a treatment and guidance special to myself. God sees and knows me as a work of His own hands, altogether distinct from all His other works. He intends me to fill a place which no other creature can fill, and is dealing with me in accordance with this special individuality. Thus I feel myself, as it were, alone with God. He only fully understands me, and He meets my need, according to His full understanding of me, by a course of circumstances chosen for my own special education by His fatherly love and wisdom . . . I feel as face to face continually with one who is watching every change that comes over my spirit, as if He had nothing else to care for in the Universe.[1]

2. But all this due and proper self-respect is balanced in the text by a very beautiful image of man's relation to his fellows. The statement which the Apostle gives us of the condition of man is by no means one-sided; it is strikingly complete. The gift of grace which is each man's peculiar possession is his in order that, by its means, he may serve his fellows. The Master who came to recognize and to concentrate individuality, to stimulate and to enlighten the sense of responsibility, came equally to serve and to educate His disciples for service. With Him each, like St. Peter, had been dealt with, moulded, influenced, after an individual fashion, receiving each his special mission in order that each might bear witness. They had 'continued with him in his tribulations,' and, through such a fellowship in suffering, their characters had been disciplined in order that they might receive a kingdom in which the very essence of kingship was to be, not *dominion*, but *service*. The petty despotism of Gentile rulers was to be no model for their imitation, 'he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.' How well did St. Peter understand this, and in how suggestive a shape does he cast his injunction to us to recognize it!

(1) For service, to be really serviceable, must be, in some measure, attractive; it must appeal, either in present realization or in hope, to the sense of the beautiful, or to the finer feeling, or to the higher reason, which is in man; it must not violate his better instincts. Real service can only be rendered to man as a *responsive* being, a being who freely answers to what is done for him. 'If we lift a people like mere clay, it falls the same.' Hence the Apostle presents as our ideal the service of the house-steward. The gift of each is to be ministered, as if each were occupying the position, honourable, and dignified, of a house-steward, whose influence, method, and management, restrained, self-effacing, orderly, and skilful, tell throughout the household like some entrancing spell. Such ready tact,

[1] Thomas Erskine of Linlathen.

such bright suggestiveness, such many-sided contact with men and matters, how we like to live under the conditions of a service like that! All this was the ideal of the house-steward which St. Peter had in mind, and after such a fashion as this it is that he would have us render our service. We need not suppose that to be courteous, respectful, and much-enduring will lower our dignity or degradè our manhood; nor need we make light of all the little refinements, all the little details, which go to make the beauty and the perfection of service. Nothing need be ugly, nothing is unimportant; for the men whom we would serve, the men who live beside us and work beside us and knock up against us in the way of life, can be won to take our service responsively, and therefore profitably, only by our finding a point of contact with them.

¶ But vast and holy as it [the temple of ministry] is, and calling as it does for every man's service, it is only entered by the gate of fitness. Not every man can walk up and down in its sacred places. They are vast, but there is no room for the coarse, the undisciplined, the untender. Only they who have trained their mind and their heart, their eyes and their hands, to its holy toil can engage in its highest ministries. God never uses an axe when He needs a lance. It may be the self-flattery of our vanity to think that there is service for all. So there is; but not until we are fit to render it. A strident voice cannot croon a lullaby. It has not the tone for the great chapters of St. John; it cannot speak the tenderest passages of David and Isaiah, of St. Paul and the Book of the Revelation. And the great words of our Lord are an open defiance of that voice to sound. The hand must be soft that essays to bind a broken heart; hardness will not bring relief, but give to the quivering flesh an added smart. A great sympathy is needed to comfort a great sorrow, and that can only be won in the devouring, cleansing furnace of a great affliction. The gate of fitness is a very beautiful gate, but it is very exigent. Its demand is peremptory, absolute, final. There is no escaping it. None serves who is not fit. But the gate leads to a temple of such wealthy opportunity that its glory beggars the power of our most eloquent speech; it makes our very dreams to lag behind its infinite and gorgeous possibility.[1]

(2) And, further, the ideal of service which the Apostle has in mind is one which is not only attractive, but also familiar. Men are rarely served by what is strange to them; for what is strange is always difficult to understand, difficult to approach, difficult, as it were, to assimilate. It is, in general, the common simple things set ready at our elbows which are the means of our being served; it is from overlooking or neglecting them that, for the most part, men are starved, and suffer in their manhood. We need to remember this. Often we are distressed because we fail to find out some new method of service; we know that in order to be of real service we must be attractively serviceable, we must be acceptable to men, and we are tempted to suppose that it is only some uncommon, out-of-the-way device which will arrest their attention and tempt them to open out to us and be our friends. And yet it is quite otherwise; they will regard us as far more winning if we can succeed in investing ordinary things with a charm and a glory of their own, or rather, if we can succeed in so letting the light fall upon such things that they may see for themselves how precious and how salutary they are. Our Lord Himself served men by means of common things, and therefore it was that He served them so profitably and attractively.

¶ 'There is a man,' said his neighbour, speaking of the village carpenter, 'who has done more good, I really believe, in this community than any other person who ever lived in it. He cannot talk very well in a prayer meeting, and he doesn't often try. He isn't worth two thousand dollars, and it's very little he can put down on subscription-papers for any object. But a new family never moves into the village that he does not find them out, to give them a neighbourly welcome and to offer any little service he can render. He is always on the lookout to give strangers a seat in his pew at church. He is always

[1] G. Beesley Austin, *Beautiful Gates in Life*, 28.

ready to watch with a sick neighbour, and look after his affairs for him. I have sometimes thought that he and his wife keep house-plants in winter just to be able to send flowers to invalids. He finds time for a pleasant word for every child he meets; and you'll see the children climbing into his one-horse wagon when he has no other load. He really seems to have a genius for helping folks in all sorts of common ways, and it does me good every day just to meet him on the street.'[1]

The Proportion.

1 Pet. iv. 10.—'As every man hath received a gift.'

1. There is a law of proportion here. '*As* every man hath received a gift, even *so* let him minister the same.' We can give large sums of money to God's service only as God makes us wealthy. It is so in earthly things, and surely it must be so in spiritual things. God gives the best gifts to us if we covet them and seek them in the right way; and the result of our possessing these best gifts is that we are proportionately able to distribute spiritual blessings. 'As every man hath received a gift, even so let him minister the same.' If we are living in the fullness of God, then the promise of Christ shall be fulfilled in our case—'out of our belly shall flow rivers of living water.' If, on the other hand, we are straitened in ourselves, and the gracious influences of God are scarcely allowed to descend upon our souls, what wonder that our life should be unprofitable, and that we should not to any degree minister the gift, simply because we receive it so scantily.

2. But we have here not only a law of proportion, we have also a law of quality, qualifying the bestowal of the gift. The gift is bestowed by the hand of Him who is an example to us in giving, as well as in every other respect. Let us dwell for a moment upon that. As we receive, so we are to give. We are reminded of that well-known yet too often forgotten passage, 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' Here we learn the true character of Christian charity. There ought to be a certain God-like liberality in our efforts to distribute the favours with which God loads us. We ought to go through the world with open-handed generosity and spiritual benevolence, stinting our measure to none; for freely we have received, and freely we ought to give.

¶ Recently a writer told us that one day he climbed a steep path in the neighbourhood of Lynmouth, to enjoy a view from the top. There, however, he found a board bearing the inscription in large letters: 'This Outlook is Private.' Ah! there are men who would make a private path of the Milky Way, claim all rights in the rainbow, and proclaim the ocean their heirloom.

If Nature is thus free, how much more the higher gifts which we have in Christ! All the riches of the Gospel are freely given of God. Will any one dare to inscribe on the crest of Calvary, 'This Outlook is Private'? Every gift of life is a free gift, the 'unspeakable' gift most of all.

'Freely give.' Ask for nothing in return—no renown, no appreciation, no gratitude. Let me be content to bless, finding my whole reward in the joy of blessing.[1]

3. But the word 'as' seems to teach us more than this. Not only have we received the gift freely, but we have received it wisely; that is to say, God, in bestowing the gift upon us, exercised a wisdom which belongs to His own nature, preparing us for the reception of the gift, and bestowing upon us just the gift appropriate to our state. Are we not too often very clumsy in this respect? We get into a kind of stereotyped way of working for God. We have our own prescribed method, which we have found to be useful, and we have a general idea that it will be the right thing in nine cases out of ten; and we go on applying it like a quack doctor, who has got one single prescription for every ailment. But what a delicate observance of human character had Christ. He meets every man according to the state of his own soul, turning sharply round upon Nicodemus with, 'Except

[1] J. R. Miller, *The Glory of the Commonplace*, 65.

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *The Gates of Dawn*, 5.

a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'; drawing out the heart of the woman at the well of Samaria, by asking a favour from her. Whenever He comes in contact with one He is going to benefit, He suits His means to His end, and prepares the recipient for the gift which He intends to bestow. If we would minister the gift as the Lord would have us minister it, we require greater delicacy of touch, keener discernment of human character, and a fuller and deeper appreciation of God's different methods of dealing with different souls, than are commonly to be met with.

¶ Of Dr. Fothergill, an eighteenth century physician and philanthropist, we are told that 'the strict discipline to which he subjected himself made him fear lest he should minister to his own self-satisfaction by the very thought of doing good—much more, by receiving the applause of his deeds. He therefore shunned publicity, 'did good by stealth, and blushed to find it fame.' The modesty of his attitude was dictated also by sympathy with those who were needy, especially with that class of persons who have known better days, and who are deterred by shame or by pride from complaining of their state. The delicacy of his manner enabled him to confer his gifts on such persons so gracefully that no modest worth was wounded. Sometimes he would suggest some motive for his bounty that seemed to make the receiver a claimant and himself only discharging a debt.' [1]

Good Stewards.

1 Pet. iv. 10.—'As good stewards.'

1. It is important to know what are the characteristics of a good steward. A sufficient answer is given in the Gospel according to St. Luke.

(1) There a good steward is said by our Lord to be faithful and wise. Such a man does not fear the sudden coming of his lord, for his is no eye service. His conduct in his lord's absence is the same as when he is at home. The result is that he is looked upon as being absolutely trustworthy, and 'his lord setteth him over all that he hath.'

(2) From the same Gospel we learn indirectly another characteristic of the good steward: 'And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he was wasting his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, What is this that I hear of thee? render the account of thy stewardship; for thou canst be no longer steward.' That which has been entrusted to him he must use. It must be used freely that the end desired may be compassed. But there must be no reckless spending of his lord's money, no devoting of it to unnecessary ends. He is not asked to hoard; he is forbidden to waste.

2. So far we have understood by the word steward a man employed by another to manage for him his estate, his house, his goods—in a word, his temporal affairs. But there is what might be called another kind of stewardship. St. Peter speaks of 'stewards of the manifold grace of God'; St. Paul of 'stewards of the mysteries of God.' There are, doubtless, certain powers which we must use in both of them, and for the faithful, wise, and economic use of which we are held responsible. We must be honest, straightforward, diligent, persevering in the discharge of our secular as well as of our religious obligations. But there are gifts held by us as stewards which belong to our distinctively Christian service; there are powers of mind, there are spiritual activities, which are called into freest play and brought to their fullest development only in that service. And these it is that must not only be kept in mind, but be looked upon as of prime importance in any consideration of that 'manifold grace' of which we are called to be stewards.

(1) Now if we are to be good stewards of the manifold grace of God, we must be able to sympathize with men at their best, and lure them on to greater heights. The context selects as illustrations speaking and ministering. Someone has said that you may 'double-first' a man up to the height of the utmost

[1] R. Hingston Fox, *Dr. John Fothergill*, 219.

possibilities of all the Universities of Europe, and if, when he stands up to preach, there comes no clear note from the land that is far off, and yet seems nigh at times, the people's voice will soon declare that he is no prophet. And, with regard to ministering, you may relieve the temporal distress of a man and go near to supporting him altogether, but if you do not waken those chords in him which are meant to give forth heavenly music, you have not yet ministered to his greatest need.

(2) However reticent the typical Englishman may be on this subject, men are keenly alive to the power which some of their fellows have to elicit a response from their higher natures. And sometimes they confess to that sensitiveness. 'It isn't very often,' said a man at the close of an address to which he had been listening—'it isn't very often that we hear the language.' He was asked what he meant. But he was a poor, rough, heavy-looking man, who evidently did not carry more words about with him than such as were absolutely necessary for the business of life. And so, looking straight at the preacher with most meaningful eyes, he said again, 'It isn't very often that we hear the language.' We must all learn the language. Would you know what that language is? Read Isaiah l. 4. It is Jehovah's servant who speaks. 'The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.' Now the word 'learned' is a mistranslation. It should be 'learners.' And so we must read, 'The Lord God hath given me the disciples' tongue.' And notice it was not a gift once given and done with. It was continuously bestowed. 'He wakeneth morning by morning.' Is it any wonder that the weary ones should understand this language and gladly listen to those who can speak it? It is the language of the three or four poor women of Bedford. 'Methought they spake as if joy did make them speak; they spake with such pleasantness of Scripture language, and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to me as if they had found a new world.' It is the language of the oracles of God. It is 'the strength which God supplieth.' And since man is constituted as he is, and his salvation is our aim, we shall fail unless we know this language and have this strength.[1]

Missions.

1 Pet. iv. 10.—'As good stewards of the manifold grace of God.'

Manifold is God's grace, manifold and different are the separate gifts which He bestows upon men. And what He gives us He gives not for ourselves alone, but for others also. He gives to us not that we may say in our hearts, 'This is my own; I may do what I like with it,' but that we may be able to contribute to the good or to the comfort of our brethren. What different lives we should lead, what a different world it would be, if we really tried in ever so small a degree to act upon this view, namely, that all we have is God's, and from God; and that His reason for giving us what we have—health, strength, money, skill, understanding—is that we may use these things not merely for our own profit or pleasure, but for the profit and pleasure of others. We can none of us do without one another. There is no man solitary and by himself. God means all His manifold gifts to be part of a common stock. He gives to others for our sake; He gives to us for their sake.

1. If it be true of the least of God's gifts that, according as each has received, so ought we to 'minister one to another as good stewards,' much more must this be true of the greatest of His gifts. The greatest of all His gifts is that fulfilment of our Saviour's promise which began in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost and has continued even to this day. When God sent down His Holy Spirit into the hearts of men, He may almost be said to have done all that could be done for sinful man on this side the grave. He gave him that which was to turn religion from something outward into something inward; which was not only to give him new knowledge about God, about himself, about

[1] A. E. Tonkin.

eternal things, but also to light up and kindle this knowledge into faith and love and hope. He gave him that which was to change and make new his heart; to put new strength, new thoughts, new desires, into it; that which was to form a link and a bond between man and God, which no trials or sorrows or losses in this life could break, and of which death itself was but the seal. All that makes the religion of Jesus Christ different from other religions—all that makes it one not of forms and words, but of inward consolation and hopes—all that makes it a worship of the Father of Spirits, in spirit and in truth—hangs upon and flows from the gift of the Spirit. It is that which has raised our lot above all other men's; above the kings and prophets of God's ancient people, above the great and the wise men of the heathen. What has been given to us is not merely a revelation and unfolding of God's truth, but a power in our hearts to take in that truth, an inward fellowship with the Spirit of God by which our spirits are brought near to God, and are taught His will, and are made to feel sure, with joy and hope, of the reality of things unseen.

2. Is, then, this great gift—this purifying and spiritualizing and making inward of all religion—for ourselves alone? Did He so send it to His first Apostles? Was it for them alone—for their comfort and guidance and salvation only? Surely far from it. It was indeed, in all its fullness, a gift to them. It was the making good of their Master's promise. It was the arrival of the unexpected Comforter. But it came to them that, through them, it might stream forth to the world. It came to them that they might be preachers of the Word and ministers of the Spirit to Jew and heathen alike. It came that the fire kindled in their hearts might spread and embrace all nations of the world. It came to them that from them it might come to us. It has come from them to us. Did it come to us that it might stop there? Have we nothing to do, think you, to send it on?

3. The law of the gospel of Christ was that it was to be an ever-spreading religion. It was at first given to a very few, and they were to hand it on to more. All, as they received it, received it with the same command from their Lord—to spread it wherever they went, wherever it could reach. We know how that command was fulfilled by Christ's Apostles; how they pushed forward from city to city, from land to land, never thinking that they had done enough while there was anything still to do. We can follow St. Paul in the Acts, as he hastens onward from Jerusalem to Antioch, from Antioch to Cyprus, from Cyprus to Lystra and Derbe and Iconium, to Ephesus and the cities of Asia; then across the sea, the vision calling him, 'into Macedonia.' Through lands barbarian and civilized, through mocking Greek and persecuting Jewish multitudes he journeys, preaching the gospel where no one had preached it before, lest he should be entering on other men's labours. From the great cities of the Greeks, Athens and Corinth, cities of the rich and the learned and the wise—like our London and Paris—he passes into the depth of the roughest and wildest countries of his age, even to Illyricum. Then, when he has conquered for Christ in the east, he presses onward to the west—to Italy, to Rome, perhaps to Spain, carrying to hitherto untaught races of the Gentiles his Master's message, his Master's gift of the Spirit.

St. Paul is one of the Apostles whose history is more particularly told us; but what he did the others did too. With them it was that 'their sound is gone out into all lands: and their words unto the ends of the world.' With them it was always to fulfil the saying that 'To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.' No one could doubt, in this case, how they had interpreted the great command of Christian communication of God's gifts, 'As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.'

4. Do we think that all we can do is so little that it is not worth doing? that all we can give is so trifling that it is not worth giving? That will not stop us if we listen to God's rule: 'As every man hath received the

gift, even so minister the same one to another.' Nothing is more striking in the rules and commands of the New Testament than their equity and reasonableness and fairness. There is no laying of the same burden on unequal shoulders. No doubt it calls on us to do our best—to do it truly and honestly; but the seriousness with which it makes this claim is shown in the just and even way in which it measures each man's duty by each man's ability. But let us remember that if we could fairly do more, and do not do it, the equity which does not claim from us more than we can do in proportion to our gifts and powers will judge us.

¶ One of the brightest souls I ever met was old Rachel Mgulayora. An interesting story was told of her devotion. When Bandawé Church was being built the women of the Atonga promised a month's work in treading clay and carrying bricks. Rachel, who was unwell, came and said, 'I am not able to give a month's work, but I will give six hens.' For her it was a generous gift, and was gratefully accepted. Some time after she came again with a two-shilling piece which she offered.

'Oh, but you cannot afford this,' said the missionary; 'you are poor and you have given already.'

But Rachel insisted, 'I got it in a present,' she explained, 'and I want it to go to the building of the church.'

A third time the faithful creature appeared with beaming face. 'I am better now,' she said, 'and I want to give my month's work.' She is the type of those older Christian women of Nyasaland who have experienced the difference between a heathen and a Christian land. Their early years were a long, hideous nightmare, through dread of the slave raider and the Ngoni warrior. Livingstone, passing through their country, cried out in anguish, 'Blood, blood, everywhere blood,' and declared that the very crocodiles in their streams were glutted with human flesh. Now they have literally passed from death to life, and they feel that there is nothing too good to do to show their gratitude.[1]

[1] J. H. Morrison, *Streams in the Desert*, 34.

Manifold Grace.

1 Pet. iv. 10.—'The manifold grace of God.'

THIS is a window opening out on a land of far distances.

1. Grace, we may say, is *the activity of the heart of God*. We know in what a variety of shapes and forms a kind heart exerts itself. It forbears. It forgives. It sympathizes. It befriends. To-day it dedicates and surrenders itself to intercession. To-morrow it will tire itself out, and yet reap to itself a harvest of refreshment and joy, in willing and laborious toil. It has a hundred outlets through which it journeys forth to heal and to bless. So it is, but much more gloriously, with God's heart. He remains the Same; but His tendernesses are multitudinous, like the *anerithmon gelasma*, the immeasurable laughter, of the sea. He is One; but His mercies have a protean freshness. The grace which pardons you and me: that is God, for Christ's sake, blotting out all our sin. The grace which sanctifies you and me: that is God, through the indwelling of His Spirit, renewing us into His Own image. The grace which enlightens the difficulties of belief and conduct: that is God, by different channels sending to us the very guidance which we require. The grace which sustains us when the night is dark and the tempest is remorseless: that is God, speaking His word in season to our soul when it is weary. We lose a great deal if we are content to think of His favour and His affection in the abstract. We should not separate them from His personality, from Himself. They are His mighty heart considering us, moving towards us, whispering in our ear the effectual comforts of Heaven, regulating our trial, stablishing our fainting strength. God is always active on behalf of His feeble children; and therefore, let our temptations be what they may, we ought to live in perpetual triumph.

2. Grace, we may say again, is *the colouring of the dress of God*. 'Manifold grace,' St. Peter writes; and the adjective is worth a

moment's investigation. Literally and etymologically it means 'many-coloured,' shimmering with various tints and hues. You recollect the chief colours of Tabernacle and Temple long ago, those which gleamed in the furnishings of the courts, those which made beautiful the sacred vestments of the priests—white, and scarlet, and purple, and blue. Is it altogether fanciful to portray the grace of God as decking and adorning itself with every one of these? It is robed in white, lustrous, stainless, crystalline; for its holiness is invincible, and it means to refine us into its own unspotted perfection. It glows and burns in rosy scarlet; for its name is Love, and its heat and vehemence are as the unquenchable fire-flame of Jehovah. A sister's love, a wife's, a mother's are not so persevering and so potent. It is wealthy and splendid in regal purple; for He who stoops to us lifts us from the dust, abides with us and within us, compels all things to work together for our good, is Lord of lords and King of kings. He laughs at impossibilities, and says, 'It shall be done!' And it shines in azure blue, the colour of the steadfast and most ancient heavens; for, whatever earthborn clouds and mists may obscure it, and may tempt us to question its continuance, it is a grace which endures and lasts, and its yesterday and to-day are the prophecy of an abundant and overcoming to-morrow. Let us set it in the radiance of its dress over against our troubles and temptations; and not one of them will affright us any more.

3. And grace, we may say too, is *the fruit of the orchard of God.* Dr. James Morison has an exquisite little essay on 'Grace Philologically Viewed.' The word, he tells us, when we trace it to its roots, signifies 'that which gives pleasure,' 'that which is truly delightful.' Beauty gives pleasure. Joy gives pleasure. Free and unfettered loving-kindness affords a whole world of the purest pleasure, and is unspeakably and incomparably delightful. Beauty, joy, loving-kindness, each of these is grace. We see each of them exemplified most alluringly and most captivatingly in God, the Father, the Saviour, the Spirit. They are the fruits of His garden. But they are fruits which He intends His people, when they have first appropriated them and found them sweet to their taste, to transplant to their own smaller and lowlier plots of ground. Dr. Hort, speaking of the dominant conception of Grace in the Acts and the Epistles,—how it meant 'the free bounty of God as exhibited in the admission of the Gentiles although they stood without the original covenant'—says, 'This is constantly associated in St. Paul's mind with the free bounty of forgiveness shown to himself the persecutor, making him the fittest of all heralds of the free *charis,* so pre-eminently in his own person a recipient of *charis.*' There it is. When we are pre-eminently in our own persons the recipients of grace, we are the fittest heralds of the free and forgiving bounty of God. Love the gift becomes love the debt. Let us receive Christ to save us from death, let us be continuously receiving the Holy Ghost to ripen us into 'more life and fuller'; and we shall be participants in the beauty of God's character, shall be baptized into the wealth of His joy and the serenity of His peace, and shall understand how to manifest His loving-kindness even to the unthankful and the evil. In St. Peter's language, you and I will be transmuted into 'good stewards of the manifold grace of God.' Then we shall be in a region where temptations, though they throng about us as thickly as snowflakes in a December storm, will have no power to hurt. Our heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord, sharing His likeness, and taking and communicating His mystic fruits.[1]

Grant us such grace that we may work Thy Will
And speak Thy words and walk before Thy Face,
Profound and calm, like waters deep and still:
Grant us such grace.

Not hastening and not loitering in our pace
For gloomiest valley or for sultriest hill,
Content and fearless on our downward race.

[1] A. Smellie.

As rivers seek a sea they cannot fill
But are themselves filled full in its embrace,
Absorbed, at rest, each river and each rill:
Grant us such grace.[1]

'Think it not Strange.'

1 Pet. iv. 12.—'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.'

'THINK it not strange.'—It is a single word in the Greek, literally, 'strange it not.'

Archbishop Alexander says[2]: I have observed one curious parallel between an expression peculiar to Worldsend [a fanciful name from a parish in the north of Ireland], and one which occurs in the Greek of the New Testament. When a Worldsend man wishes to express his astonishment, especially at something which he thinks unkind, or undeserved by him, he says, 'I strange it greatly.' Compare with this—'Wherein they think it strange.' 'Beloved, think it not strange.'

¶ It is only human to groan in dejection; but God has ever an inspiring side to a depressing reality. The earthly moan, 'Why this waste?' is countered by God's own reproof, 'Think it not strange.'[3]

1. Note, first, how the whole pungency of this reproof lies in the fact that it is St. Peter who is the writer. He preaches what he is going to practise. For this Peter it is who is doomed to die. All his life this man carries the Cross, and finally on a cross he must yield up his life. Yet is there no resenting of death on his part. On the contrary, he alone it is—this doomed-to-die Peter—who writes of ours being 'a living hope' or *hope of life*. In these throbbing words we see not merely life but life more abundant. Thus it is he invites us, as it were, into his most sacred confidence in the solemn concern of his own approaching decease. He urges that his cross is really a crown. He says, We are begotten unto a hope of life, and I, Peter, hereby certify that it is not death to die. Jesus Christ hath abolished death for Peter, and much more than that, He hath brought life and immortality to light; therefore ours can only be a living hope. No wonder Peter disowns the very word 'death.' The outsiders, of course, assert that Peter died. Peter himself, while yet in the body, says: 'I must put off this my tabernacle.'

This glimpse into the deep recesses of St. Peter's heart is worth more than gold to us. We see the power of Christ's resurrection energizing his soul with the joy of the life eternal. His words are not the sad, gloomy forebodings of a hopeless soul. He strikes the same note as 'beloved brother Paul' in his last farewell to the Church of God. St. Paul, too, declares that the hour of his departure is at hand. It is St. Paul in chains who shouts that 'our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death!' These words would thrill us at any point of Paul's noble life; how much more thrilling are they *on the eve of his execution!* 'I am now ready to be offered,' but, death of ignominy notwithstanding, it is not death to die.

2. The mighty martyrs of our God knew Christ's cross too well to think their carrying of the Cross to be strange. The 'strange act' of God was when He rose up in wrath against 'His own Son' for our redemption. And with the dying Peter and the dying Paul the vision of love at the Cross hushed every human murmur. The strange thing was that the Son of God so suffered. And now all that remains for us is to be partakers of His sufferings. Not merely to 'think it not strange concerning the fiery trial,' but positively to rejoice inasmuch as we are partakers of it.

'Think it not strange'—for the servant is certainly not above his Lord. 'Think it not strange'—for the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. All the records of first-century Christianity have reached us soaked in blood and tears. Down the corridors of time come wafted the Roman shrieks, 'The Christians to the lions!' If we think it strange, then admittedly we have forgotten to arm.

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.
[2] *Primate Alexander*, 115.
[3] D. Crawford, *Thirsting after God*, 95.

St. Peter could say all this, for he was going to die upon this very truth. But he also claims for his readers a full cup to drink. In v. 10 they are declared to be 'in Christ.' Now, one great point of our being members of the Body of Christ is declared to be that if one member suffers all the members suffer with it. Hence the Divine order is: (1) Partakers of Christ (Heb. iii. 14); (2) Partakers of Christ's sufferings (1 Pet. iv. 13); (3) Partakers of the Glory (1 Pet. v. 1).

3. 'Think it not strange.' Is not that what we shall say whenever we find ourselves facing some bitter cup of incoming sorrow? We shall smile at it, smile a little bitterly, perhaps, but smile, saying, 'Well, you are no stranger; you come as one whom I should recognize quite well as a friend. Have I not waited for you all this time, and I have been spared you so long—thank God for that—and now here at last you are, and I am not surprised. It is no strange thing at all that I should suffer, for Christ suffered everything that could be suffered long ago, to show me just what might happen. And now it is come to pass, I remember all that He said about it, and can see now why He set Himself to endure it all, before my day arrived, that I might be able to say when it came, "It is all written down in the Scriptures. I knew that it had to come."'

¶ Two years before he died George J. Romanes became blind. In answer to a letter of sympathy from the son of his old teacher —Darwin—he wrote: 'It is comparatively easy to set our teeth and face the inevitable with a "grin," but the "highest bravery" is to hide our anguish with a smile. I do think I make a decently good Stoic, but confess that in times like this Christians have the pull.'[1]

[1] H. Lewis, *Modern Rationalism*, 374.

Mistaking Trial.

1 Pet. iv. 12.—'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.'

The teaching of Scripture is consistent throughout in regard to trials—that they are for our good, either sent or permitted by God's providence; that they are marks of His love, and a great factor in the development of character; that, if rightly borne, their reward is a crown; that they work out in us nothing less than the glories of heaven.

And yet, as we look out upon the world, trials often seem to have the very opposite effect. We see persons who are soured and embittered by their trials, who are discontented and rebellious under their afflictions, whose finer sensibilities seem blunted and their character warped by the adverse circumstances of their lives. We may well ask, Why is this? It is largely through failure to understand the true meaning of afflictions, to recognize in them the loving hand of God, and to rely upon God's grace to meet and bear all trials.

1. The first mistake is that of *thinking our trials strange and unexpected.* Most people admit in theory that they must expect trials and temptations to befall them in this life, but a very large number of them seem to think that their own peculiar trials and temptations ought not to have happened to them, that they are not the sort of trials which they expected, or, indeed, which they ought to be called upon to bear. The result of this misapprehension is that they meet their temptations in an entirely wrong spirit. They complain of the injustice of them, instead of bracing themselves up to meet them, and either to endure them or to overcome them. That this mistake is not a rare one is shown by the fact that both St. Peter and St. Paul warn us against it. St. Peter writes, 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory

shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.' And St. Paul's teaching is very similar: 'There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man'—where the word translated 'common to man' signifies that which is proper to man, or which is not beyond a man's strength.

> These are the trials meet for such as you,
> Nor must you hope exemption; to be mortal,
> Is to be plied with trials manifold.[1]

¶ He had learned the secret of St. Paul—*not to look upon his own things, but also upon the things of others*—that sovereign way of escape from the self-absorption and panic which temptation so often breeds in the best of characters. No man felt temptation more fiercely, or from the pressure of it has sent up cries of keener agony, than St. Paul who buffeted his own body and kept it under. But how did he rise above the despair? By remembering that *temptation is common to man*, by throwing his heart upon the fight which men were everywhere waging about him, and by forgetting his own fears and temptations in interest and sympathy for others. Such souls are engrossed spectators of the drama of life: they are purged by its pity, and ennobled by the contemplation of its issues. But a great sense of honour, too, is bred within them as they spring shoulder to shoulder with so many struggling comrades—a sense of honour that lifts them free of the baser temptations—and they are too interested in the fate of their fellows, and too busy with the salvation of others, to brood or grow morbid about themselves.[2]

2. A second mistake which good people often make about trials is that they *regard them as sins, and their continuance as a sign of failure on their own part.* Trials are not sins, unless we consent to them wilfully. They may be attempts of the Evil One to lead us into sin; but so long as we refuse to yield to them, they not only do not cause us to sin, but they enable us to win the glorious rewards of victory over trial. Then, too, we must remember that their persistent continuance is no sign of failure on our part. As St. Francis de Sales admirably puts it (when dealing with temptations to sins of thought), a dog goes on barking because he is not let in, and when the door is opened, and he is allowed to enter, he ceases barking. So the persistence of a trial is generally a sign that we have not yielded, that we have kept the door of our heart fast closed against trials. When we have yielded, the trial generally ceases for awhile.

3. A third mistake is being *over-anxious to get rid of temptations and trials.* As a spiritual writer has observed, they are the raw material out of which our crown of glory is to be fashioned; they are intended by God to do a certain work in developing our souls; and if we were to get rid of them before their work was accomplished, our souls would be imperfect, and our crown robbed, perhaps, of some of its brightest jewels. Do not be anxious to be rid of temptation; only seek grace to enable you to bear it rightly; only pray that temptation may effect in you God's loving purpose, which is your sanctification.

¶ Trials are the invisible fingers of God which strike a hidden chord in our lives, so that music may come out which has long been unheard. Trials make life's music sweeter, it becomes more mellow when enriched by sorrow. Trial often discovers the very best that is in us. Trials are the angels of God in disguise, which crush out of our souls the richer wine of a greater consecration and deeper devotion to His service. Trials are the sinking shafts which strike a richer and deeper vein of gold in our lives. All life is a great university, in which most of us are but very ignorant pupils; our text-books are our trials. Sometimes we learn our lessons with aching head, tear-stained face, and sinking heart; this is how we get to know the deep things of life and God. His method of education is mysterious and trying, but it is the curriculum through which all the faithful have passed. The way, then, to a knowledge of God and Divine things is through the gates of trial and the school of tribulation.[1]

[1] Browning.
[2] G. A. Smith, *The Life of Henry Drummond*, 5.

[1] W. Kirk Bryce, *Life's Greatest Forces*, 51.

4. A fourth mistake is *thinking that our trials are greater than we can bear*, and so becoming discouraged. How frequently we meet with persons who say they are tried beyond endurance, who really give up struggling against temptation because they have come to believe that they cannot conquer their own particular temptation. Hear what St. Paul says to such: 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' This passage deserves our most serious consideration. It forbids us ever to say that we are tempted above our ability. It assures us, on the authority of God's own faithfulness, that He will not suffer us to be tempted above our ability; so that we must never say that we cannot conquer our temptations; for, as St. Paul tells us, there is always the way of escape, if only we will use it.

¶ There is a beautiful passage in St. Ephrem Syrus, in which he likens the soul under temptation, but in God's hands, to the vessels which the potter makes. They are made of clay, in itself poor material, and quite useless until it has passed through the furnace and been hardened by exposure to its heat. The potter watches the vessels in the furnace, and tempers the heat with great judgment, so that it may exactly effect its purpose. Too little heat, and the vessels would not be properly hardened; too much, and they would be cracked and ruined. Then the potter regulates not only the heat of the furnace, but the time during which the pots are exposed to its operation. If he withdrew them too soon, they would still be soft and useless; if he left them in too long, they would become broken and spoiled. So, says St. Ephrem, does God deal with us, and out of vessels of human clay makes the saints of heaven. And the process is the same—the human clay has to pass through the furnace of trial and temptation; and those trials and temptations are, so to speak, graduated precisely to each one's ability to bear them.[1]

5. The fifth mistake we make is generally about *the bearing of trial or temptation*. With every trial God sends grace, that we may be able to bear it; so that trial is like a spiritual barometer, which enables us to measure the amount of grace which God has given us. A barometer, as we know, is an instrument for measuring the weight of the air. The air varies according to the atmospheric conditions, and the column of mercury is balanced by the pressure or weight of the air. Similarly, since God with every trial sends grace to enable us to bear it, we may measure the amount of grace God has bestowed upon us by the pressure or weight of trial which we experience. Grace is not given us where it is not needed; it is given to be used, so that, as the hymn reminds us,

> Let not fears your course impede,
> Great your strength, if great your need.

6. The last mistake is *refusing to seek or to use the means of escape which God provides*. This is not the same in every temptation, or for every person; but there always is the way of escape, that is, some one special means of grace by which we may be able to bear the temptations. In the Authorized Version, unfortunately, we read, God 'will with the temptation also make a way to escape.' In the original it is, 'the way' that is, one special way for each temptation. For some, it is greater earnestness in prayer; for others, meditation on God's holy Word; often it is the use of some special Sacrament. But there is always the way by which we may be able to bear our trials, and we must never rest satisfied till we have sought out and found that way.

¶ 'Words I have known all my life have a new force within them now,' she said suddenly one day; and she told how a great dread had been upon her, lest when, near the end, the pain grew more violent, and her will weaker to endure, she would not be able to bear it. And once when this fear oppressed her, almost like a voice speaking aloud, the words of the promise reassured her: 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the

[1] A. G. Mortimer.

temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.' That negative verb, which in Tamil idiom has it that God will not give room for such a thing to happen, was an immense comfort to Ponnamal, and she took delight in Ridley's words to Latimer: 'Be of good cheer, brother; for God will either assuage the fury of the flame, or strengthen us to abide it.'[1]

The Fiery Trial.

1 Pet. iv. 12.—'The fiery trial among you' (RV).

What is the purpose of 'the fiery trial'? What is the meaning of this permitted ministry of suffering?

1. Well, in the first place, *it tests character.* It discharges the purpose of an examination. An examination, rightly regarded, is a vital part of our schooling. It is a minister of revelation. It unfolds our strengths and our weaknesses. And so it is in the larger examination afforded by the discipline of life. Our crises are productive of self-disclosures. They reveal us to ourselves, and the revelations are usually creative of grateful surprise. In the midst of the fiery trial we are filled with amazement at the fullness and strength of our resources. When the trial is looming we shrink from it in fear. We say one to another, 'I don't know how I shall bear it!' And then the crisis comes, and in the midst of the fire we are calm and strong; and when it is past, how frequently we are heard to say, 'I never thought I could have gone through it!' And so 'probation worketh hope'; the heavy discipline is creative of assurance; the terror becomes the nutriment of our confidence.

¶ We had a distant relation, in her young-womanhood when I was a child, who, living in the country, came into Norwich sometimes on market days, and occasionally called at our house. She had become deaf in infancy—very, very deaf; and her misfortune had been mismanaged. Truth to speak, she was far from agreeable: but it was less for that than on account of the trouble of her deafness that she was spoken of as I used to hear, long before I ever dreamed of being deaf myself. When it was announced by any child at the window that —— was passing, there was an exclamation of annoyance; and if she came up the steps, it grew into lamentation. 'What *shall* we do?' 'We shall be as hoarse as ravens all day.' 'We shall be completely worn out,' and so forth. Sometimes she was wished well at Jericho. When I was growing deaf, all this came back upon me; and one of my self-questionings was—'Shall *I* put people to flight as —— does? Shall *I* be dreaded and disliked in that way all my life?' The lot did indeed seem at times too hard to be borne. Yet here am I now, on the borders of the grave, at the end of a busy life, confident that this same deafness is about the best thing that ever happened to me;—the best, in a selfish view, as the grandest impulse to self-mastery; and the best in a higher view, as my most peculiar opportunity of helping others, who suffer the same misfortune without equal stimulus to surmount the false shame, and other unspeakable miseries which attend it.[1]

2. But the fiery trial not only tests by revealing character, it *also strengthens and confirms it.* Hard trial makes hard and much-enduring muscle. The water that is too soft makes flabby limbs; it is not creative of bone. And circumstances which are too soft make no bone; they are productive of character without backbone. Luxuriousness is rarely the cradle of giants. It is not unsuggestive that the soft and bountiful tropics are not the home of the strong, indomitable, and progressive peoples. The pioneering and progressive races have dwelt in sterner and harder climes. The lap of luxury does not afford the elementary iron for the upbringing of strong and enduring life. Hardness hardens; antagonism solidifies; trials innure and confirm. How commonly it has happened that men who, in soft circumstances have been weak and irresolute, were hardened into fruitful decision by the ministry of antagonism and pain. 'Thou art Simon'—a hearer, a man of loose hearsays and happenings; 'Thou shalt be called Peter'—a rock,

[1] Amy Wilson Carmichael, *Ponnamal*, 109.

[1] *Harriet Martineau's Autobiography*, i. 77.

a man of hard, compact, and resolute convictions. But 'Simon' became 'Peter' through the ministry of the fiery trial. The man of 'soft clothing' is in the luxury of kings' houses; the hard man with the camel's hair and leathern girdle is away out in the hardships of the desert. 'We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.'

¶ Suffering and sorrow appear to be necessary to the growth of great souls. People nursed in ease and comfort are apt to be soft-fibred and flabby, and they grow into strength and nobility only as they are cradled in hard circumstances and rocked by storms. Great souls nearly always wear crowns that have been fashioned in the fires of great sorrows. Even the highest art springs out of the soil of suffering. 'If I could make you suffer for two years,' said an eminent teacher to a noted singer, 'you would be the greatest contralto in Europe.'[1]

The strength of every soul is less
Till it has touched the wilderness,
And learned to be alone;
'Tis from the desert we command
The prospect of our promised land
And sight of Judah's throne.

'Tis in the desert God prepares
His destined ones to be the heirs
Of ages yet to be;
For only they who stand and wait
Beside the shade of suffering's gate
Shall earn the right, at last, though late,
To bid the bond be free.

3. But the fiery trial not only reveals and hardens the character, it also *develops it by bringing out its hidden beauties.* Use the word develop as the photographer uses it. You know how he brings out the lines of his pictures. The picture is laid in the vessel, and the liquid is moved and moved across it; it passes over the face of the picture, and little by little the hidden graces are disclosed. 'All thy billows are gone over me.' That is the Lord's developer; it brings out the soft lines in the character. Under its ministry we pass 'from strength to strength,' 'from grace to grace,' 'from glory to glory.'

¶ In Barrie's 'Margaret Ogilvy' is a chapter with the suggestive title, 'How my mother got her soft face.' She got it through suffering. Her boy was hurt. News had come that he was near death, far away from home, and the mother set out to go to him, hoping to reach him in time to minister to him and comfort him. Her ticket was bought, she had bidden the other children good-bye at the station. Then the father came out of the little telegraph office and said huskily, 'He's gone!' and they all went home again up the little brae. The mother never recovered from the shock. She was another woman ever after, however, a better woman, gentler. Barrie says, 'That is how my mother got her soft face, and her pathetic ways and her large charity, and why other mothers run to her when they have lost a child.' There are many other mothers who have got soft faces in the same way. They have had troubles very hard to bear, but their lives have been made more beautiful by the hardness. That is part of what Christ is to us—He leads us through pain and loss, but our faces grow softer.[1]

[1] J. H. Snowden, *Is the World Growing Better?* 28.

Partakers of Christ's Sufferings.

1 Pet. iv. 13.—'Insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice' (RV).

In what sense is it true that the Christian can have a partnership with the sufferings of Christ?

1. In the first place, notice that the Apostle does not speak respecting the sufferings which Christ shares with us, but rather of certain sufferings which we share with Christ. There are a variety of sufferings common to the race which Christ in taking our nature upon Him endured. There was pain, there was disappointment, there was bereavement, there was loss; all these He shared because He took our flesh and wore our nature; but it is not of these that St. Peter is speaking. Sweet though the thought may be to the Christian heart,

[1] J. R. Miller, *The Glory of the Commonplace*, 183.

that there is not a single sorrow or a single tear that Christ does not fully understand, because He too has been a partner in our sorrows, the Apostle is not speaking of those sufferings which Christ shared with us, but rather of some special class of sufferings which we are to share with Christ. There is all the difference in the world between the sorrows which are rather the sorrows of humanity, in which Christ, in becoming Man, of necessity participated, and those sufferings which belong to the Christian life, and which only Christian lives can share with Christ. The whole analogy of similar passages in the Old Testament shows us that the Apostle is speaking of the sufferings which we suffer as Christians. St. Paul, taking up similar language with St. Peter, says, 'The sufferings of Christ abound in us.' And he is not afraid to write in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, 'I am at work that I may fill up that which is lacking of the sufferings of Christ for his body's sake, which is the church.' That is to say, he describes himself as distinctly supplementing the sorrows of Christ, as though there were a certain class of sufferings which the Christian teacher, the Christian labourer, and the Christian disciple ought to fill up for the sake of Christ. Hence it is not merely of the ordinary sorrow which all mankind share in common, and which Christ shared with them, that the Apostle is speaking, but of something special which Christ suffered, and which the Christian must suffer with Christ.

2. Neither can the reference be to the sorrows and sufferings which Christ underwent in the course of that work which was peculiarly His own. Many reading that passage in the Epistle to the Colossians have seemed to draw from it the idea that the great mediatorial work of Christ's redemption is completed by the Church at large; that there is, so to speak, in the sufferings of the saints of God an accumulation of meritoriousness which completes the work of Christ. Nothing can be farther from the Apostle's conception than that; the passage in St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians has no connection whatever with such an idea. The whole force and stress of the apostolic argument is entirely in the opposite direction. No truth stands out more plainly in the pages of the inspired writer than this, that Christ wrought a distinct work, which was complete, which none but He could work, and which, as He who was the Divine alone could work, so no mere mortal could share it with Him.

3. If we exclude the sorrows of life which are common to all mankind, if we exclude the special sufferings of Christ on the Cross as our Redeemer, what are the sufferings which we are privileged to share with Christ? In one sense the work of Christ was complete; He wrought a perfect and complete work upon the Cross that all mankind might feel that there was a reality in the invitation that the weakest and weariest might find rest in Him. But, on the other hand, there is a deep and real sense in which the work of Christ is not complete. Christ may be supposed to have formed a great steel plate, on which every line and letter is engraved; but the work of striking off the impressions is left for the Church of Christ to do. He formed every lineament, He completed every feature of the Christian character which was to be stamped upon mankind; He wrought all that great and glorious work which was the great picturing of Divine love in the eyes of man. But, having wrought that, He left it to His disciples to carry forth that image to the world. They were to preach the gospel, to impress it upon the characters of men; they were in fact to work out that which Christ had left them to work. He had given them the rule, they were to work out the examples; He had given them the seed, they were to sow it in the hearts of men. And thus, though the work which Christ wrought specially, as the great Mediator between God and man, was achieved and accomplished once for all when He cried 'It is finished,' the great work of carrying on the knowledge of that completed work was left to the Church of Christ, and in the sufferings which were the necessities of the growth of Christianity Christ's followers were said to fill up His sufferings.

Christ's Church is built up in suffering.

No man who reflects upon the growth of all that is good, and true, and righteous in the world but must feel that it has been built up by suffering. There is not a truth which is incorporated in our creeds, there is not a single aphorism of Christianity which is dear to our hearts, that has not been consolidated by the blood of suffering men and women. No matter how much the world may imagine that the first revelation of Christ finished the work, and that nothing was left to do, there will still remain perpetual witness that the history of the Christian Church has been a history of suffering in consequence of its fidelity to its Master. It is true that the open and visible Church of Christ has often been rendered feeble by its worldly alliances, but there has always been the Church within the Church, which has held faithful allegiance to the teachings of the Master, and has brought them forth at the cost of life itself.

In carrying out the work of Christ, Christians are privileged to become partners with Christ in His suffering. All who in whatsoever sphere of life are labouring to promote righteousness, who are opposing injustice and oppression, who are striving to make the principles and the teachings of Christ operate over the hearts of their fellow-men, and who, therefore, meet with derision and contempt, are sharing the sufferings of Christ. If ye be reproached for the sake of Christ, happy are ye; if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye. If it be that you feel that you must speak out because of the unrighteousness and oppression which are demoralizing and degrading the name of Christian, that you are bound to lift up your voice against them—in so far as you are doing this, you are suffering with Christ.

I saw the Son of God go by
  Crowned with the crown of Thorn.
'Was It not finished, Lord?' I said,
  'And all the anguish borne?'

He turned on me His awful eyes:
  'Hast thou not understood?
Lo! Every soul is Calvary,
  And every sin a Rood.'[1]

[1]Rachel Annand Taylor.

4. But there is another sense in which we may also share the sufferings of Christ. All Christian life is progressive. Anyone who imagines that the moment when the idea of pardon is first accepted in a soul is the consummation of all needed Christian experience will find that God will deal with him in such sort that he will be obliged to see how much he needs to learn. For Christian life is not merely the declaration of pardon, it is the sanctification of the spirit, and therefore it is progressive. And as Christian life is thus progressive, so the capacity of sharing a certain order of Christ's sufferings grows within us. Sin is an intense pain to those who are contending with it; and just in proportion (the Apostle uses judicious language as we shall see) as we are contending with sin within ourselves, or outside ourselves, in that proportion will sin be a positive pain to us. To the pure and holy Christ, living in the midst of our world, there was no pain equal to this—that He had to be in daily contact with sin. For Him physical suffering was not half so agonizing a thing as contact with sin. Nothing to the pure spirit, nothing to the highly wrought organization of those to whom spiritual purity is a real conception can be a more intense pain than that. If a pure-minded person were of necessity forced to go through the filthy and obscene details of the police records, even physical agony would be preferable. So, he who feels that his spiritual life is growing, that his grasp upon holiness and his love of purity is daily strengthening, begins to understand what intense pain Christ must have endured in daily contact with sin; and so he becomes a partaker in that degree of the sufferings of Christ.

¶ It is safe to say that no man in our generation can have heard confession more constantly than Drummond did. And this responsibility, about which he was ever as silent as about his own inner struggles, was a heavy burden and a sore grief to him. If some of the letters he received be specimens of the confidence poured into his ears, we can understand him saying, as he did to one friend: 'Such tales of woe I've heard in Moody's inquiry room that I have felt I must go and change my very

clothes after the contact'; or to another when he had come from talking privately with some students: 'Oh, I am sick with the sins of these men! How can God bear it!' And yet it is surely proof of the purity of the man and of the power of the gospel he believed in, that thus knowing the human heart and bearing the full burden of men's sins, he should, nevertheless, have believed (to use his own words) 'in the recoverableness of a man at his worst,' and have carried with him wherever he went the air of health and of victory.[1]

Scarcely Saved.

1 Pet. iv. 18.—'And if the righteous scarcely be saved.'

In the great struggle of Nature competing forms are so evenly balanced against each other that the slightest advantage determines the successful plant or animal. Darwin's words are: 'A grain in the balance may determine which individuals shall live and which shall die; which variety or species shall increase in number, and which shall decrease or finally become extinct.' 'A grain in the balance.' Very astonishing is the vast part that the grain plays in deciding the mighty fortunes of Nature. It has been said, somewhat reproachfully, that the modern mind is 'drunk with the microscope'; but careful experiment shows that he who does not know the little does not know much, that 'man's biggest organs are his atoms,' and that in Nature generally the minute is almighty: 'the retired sphere of leasts' turns out the sovereign sphere. The presence or absence of the grain in the balance is equally decisive in society. That which determines between the successful and the unsuccessful, the rich and the poor, the famous and the forgotten, is often singularly insignificant—a mere particle. So the moral triumph of man repeatedly seems due to superiority in strength by just a degree. 'Scarcely saved.' The saint of fairest reputation is humble, knowing how nearly he escaped failure; he is full of charity for the fallen, because he feelingly remembers how his own feet were almost gone and his steps had wellnigh slipped.

Mark Rutherford, in one of his books, indulges in this just reflection: 'Do not those of us who have been mercifully prevented from damning ourselves before the whole world, who have succeeded and triumphed—do we not know, know as we hardly know anything else, that our success and triumph were due to superiority in strength by just a grain, no more, of our better self over the raging rebellion beneath it? It was just a tremble of the tongue of the balance; it might have gone this way, or it might have gone the other, but by God's grace it was this way settled—God's grace, as surely, in some form of words, everybody must acknowledge it to have been.' He who does not feel the truth of this reflection cannot have marked very carefully his experience, and he is one who stands in special peril. The righteous are vividly conscious of the fact that more than once they escaped by a hair's breadth. Such are the weakness and folly of human nature that our salvation is rendered possible only in the infinite power and grace of God.

1. Let us then, first of all, take to heart the fact that the working out of our salvation is a serious thing, attended by infinite difficulty. We are familiar with peril in our natural life. The fury and lightning of the storm, the dangers of the sea, the chances of war, the perils of the mines, the risks of locomotion, the snares of machinery, the threatenings of fire, violence and epidemic, with many other sources and agents of destruction, beset our path; and only by constant circumspection do we escape, if we escape at all. There is far more tension of awareness in our natural life than at first appears. Yet the peril of the soul is certainly not less; and the best are conscious that they have nothing of which to boast. Whilst we believe, we are compelled to plead, 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' The dread occasion of temptation leaves us humbled by the knowledge that we were saved yet so as by fire. The recurrent sense of personal frailty feelingly reminds us of the jeopardy in which we walk. The stress of trial,

[1] G. A. Smith, *The Life of Henry Drummond*, 10.

sorrow, and mystery perpetually extorts the cry, 'Save, Lord, or we perish.'

A commentator is well within the truth who declares: That any single believer comes off at last victorious against so great apparent odds is to be accounted for only on the principle that what with men is impossible is possible with God. The most thrilling rescues of fire-ladder or lifeboat are dull metaphors of the wonderful deliverances of the soul from sin and hell. Heaven must have held its breath several times over the best of us. Let us, then, take care that henceforth we put our whole soul into the work of its own salvation; despising nothing, neglecting nothing. There is no telling in our spiritual life with what vast consequences miscroscopic gains are fraught, or what tragedies the lack of those gains may entail. The atom becomes a spiritual rock which guarantees our salvation; the grain turns in our favour the balances of eternity.

Oh the little more, and how much it is!
And the little less, and what worlds away!

2. Many Christian people despise the minute accessions of light and strength secured by daily study, vigilance, and effort. Because our increase in knowledge and energy is so slight as to be imperceptible we neglect the opportunities which promise so little. If we received sudden and splendid bursts of light, if our character blazed out in memorable transfigurations, if our work straightway bore a hundred-fold, we should be satisfied; but the atomic increment, the slight happy variation in our experience, an added grain or cell of life and force, are lightly esteemed. It is a mistake. The minute gain of daily faithfulness is in its significance immense.

¶ The naturalist tells us that some flowers are curiously sensitive to a single degree of cold more or less; let the thermometer drop just half a degree too much, and the glories shrivel up black and dead as though they had passed through a furnace. The fatal 'half-degree' is the thing to escape or withstand. What havoc will the half-degree of intensified trouble and temptation work in the experience of the weak. On the contrary, how blessed are those who, a little stronger, can successfully defy heightened trial. Truth a trifle more clearly discerned; faith, enhanced as by a grain of mustard seed; love, clinging by an added tendril; and hope, the anchor of the soul, somewhat more surely biting the solid ground mean much in the history of a soul.[1]

3. But difficulty of process does not mean uncertainty of issue. The end may be sure while the way there is hard. This thought, in one form or another, has been set in proverbs. 'The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small.' That is the Divine side of it. The grinding is slow and difficult, but God's mills never fail. 'Perseverance conquers all things.' That is the human side of it. Indeed, in a burst of enthusiasm resolution has been declared 'omnipotent.' Turning to the Scriptures we find the thought phrased thus: 'Through much tribulation we enter into the kingdom of heaven.' The way to heaven is at a cost. It is over mountains and through seas. It is by hard battling, fierce conflict, struggle and heartaches, stress and pain, loss and cross, with exceeding great difficulty. But it is heaven at last sure. It is through much tribulation the righteous enter into the kingdom, but they enter. 'I give unto them eternal life,' says Jesus, 'and they shall never perish.' St. Peter, therefore, is not casting any doubt upon the salvation of the righteous by his frank admission of the difficulty of it. He tells the Christians to whom he is writing that they are to meet fiery trial, that they are to be reproached for the name of Christ; but he bids them rejoice at this, pronounces them 'blessed' for it, and says, 'the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you.'

The certainty of the Judgment, coupled with the conviction of its imminence, might have been expected to have thrown a gloom over the life and thought of early Christianity. The effect was precisely the opposite. The conviction of the near return of the Lord Jesus filled their hearts with joy and exultation. *Maranatha* ('the Lord cometh'), often

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

heard on the lips of leaders in intensest moments of spiritual enthusiasm, was caught up by the early Church and adopted as a watchword of triumph. And yet they knew full well that, when He came, He came to separate and to discern, piercing beneath all outward disguises. They knew—for they had been told not once or twice—that the unrighteous (and it is in the doing, not in the saying, of righteous things that a man's righteousness shall be known in that day) shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. 'There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.' They knew that if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. Well might they exceedingly quake and fear; and yet, confident that He who had begun a good work in them would perfect it until the day of Christ, they looked forward with hope that maketh not ashamed to the coming of the Lord with all His saints.

¶ It may be that each generation wakes up to discern Christ's advent, as each member of it opens his eyes in the article of death and realizes the spiritual judgment being enacted on earth already. The day of the Lord may be extending down through all centuries, and yet His manifestation may arrive at successive moments to successive souls as they pass—until the evening of human history, in the sunset of the world's last day. At any rate this much is certain. When life closes, Christ will appear to each one of us as our Redeemer and our Judge. He may arrive at any moment, He will surely come soon. To a Christian the day of the Lord means at least the day when we die; and the New Testament points forward to it as a day of release and rapture, the gateway of full salvation to a believing soul.[1]

Ah! what time wilt Thou come? when shall
    that crie
'The Bridegroome's comming!' fill the sky?
Shall it in the evening run
When our words and works are done?
Or will Thy all-surprising light
Break at midnight,
. . . . . .
Or shall these early fragrant hours
Unlock thy bowres?
. . . . . .
Let my course, my aym, my love,
And chief acquaintance be above;
So when that day and hour shall come,
In which Thyself will be the Sun,
Thou'lt find me drest and on my way,
Watching the break of Thy great day.[1]

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible*, 309.

Keeping.

1 Pet. iv. 19.—'Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.'

This is the exhortation of the Apostle. When we remember from whom it comes, it awakens the greater interest. This is the saying of Simon Peter, surely the most impulsive of Christian men; the most unequal in his own experience; the earliest to confess openly the Messiahship of Jesus, and the first to deny Him; the most self-confident and the most afraid; the rashest and the most timid; the coward and the hero; not only before but after Pentecost showing tokens of the inequality of his emotion and the unsteadiness of his faith. Yet he in his old age, so calm and still, 'knowing that he must soon put off this tabernacle,' writes full of peace and wisdom to us all. And the lesson which he had learned in his own experience, so dearly bought, is that which he passes on to us. This is the cure for constant failure, and unexpected mistakes. 'Commit the keeping of thy soul to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.' 'He is faithful that promised:' that is the ground of confidence for the future.

It is only right to say that the case referred to by the Apostle is that of Christians who are called to suffer for their testimony. It is part of the general exhortation made (v. 12-19) to those who suffer 'as Christians,' and possibly

[1] Henry Vaughan.

the primary application of the verse may be to those threatened by persecution. 'Let them commit the keeping of their lives to their faithful Creator.' But the words obviously have a much more extensive reference, taking in not only all causes of suffering, as well as persecution, but also the keeping of the 'soul' in and through trouble, affliction, and temptation by the faithful Creator.

1. What, then, is the duty urged in this exhortation of St. Peter? It is that we should 'commit the keeping of the soul' to God. This matter of keeping, which is one of so great concern to man, is too often dealt with and struggled for in our own strength alone. It is not taken to the Lord to be dealt with by Him. Too often men have not learned that it is possible to be kept. The idea has not dawned upon them, they have not been so taught. They have thought it part of their necessary trial as Christians to fall, or to be cold and indifferent. A better state has not for them, with their present surroundings, seemed a practicable thing. Therefore they have not expected it. Even where they have confessed their failure and asked for something better, they have done so without any heart, as if they did not look for it.

2. But now, says St. Peter, let all this be changed. Let them commit this matter of being kept, which is so important a thing for them, and so hopeless of attainment by themselves—let them commit it to God! 'Committing' is handing over—putting into the hand of God, to be taken care of: and this is what they are to do with their 'souls'—or rather with the 'keeping of their souls'—it is to be a definite act of faith. I bring the matter to God; I hand it over to God; and I leave it with God. He is trusted with it. It is henceforth part of His care; and I am at rest.

3. The keeping is to be 'in well doing.' Two meanings are possible here—that we may expect God to keep us so long as we continue in well-doing, or to keep us in well-doing. The former is more especially the meaning of the verse, but, strange to say, it passes over into and ultimately includes the latter also. When we yield to temptation and are doing wrong, we can no longer expect God to keep us. It is only as we surrender to His will, and yield to the movements of His blessed Spirit, that we can look to Him to do so. But if we so obey, God's keeping will go farther. When we put away from us the open sin that we know, and the temptation which doth so easily beset us—doing so by God's strength, and trusting Him to keep us—He will by His Holy Spirit reach down to depths within, and will both purify and keep pure there. We, willingly consenting to have God work in our souls His own gracious work, shall find Him willing to do more for us than we ask. It is 'in well doing' that we must trust Him to keep us, and it is for well-doing likewise.

Now wilt me take for Jesus' sake,
  Nor cast me out at all;
I shall not fear the foe awake,
  Saved by Thy City Wall;
But in the night with no affright
  Shall hear him steal without,
Who may not scale Thy wall of might,
  Thy Bastion, nor redoubt.

Full well I know that to the foe
  Wilt yield me not for aye,
Unless mine own hand should undo
  The gates that are my stay;
My folly and pride should open wide
  Thy doors and set me free
'Mid tigers striped and panthers pied
  Far from Thy liberty.

Unless by debt myself I set
  Outside Thy loving ken,
And yield myself by weight of debt
  Unto my fellow-men.
Deal with my guilt Thou as Thou wilt,
  And 'hold' I shall not cry,
So I be Thine in storm and shine,
  Thine only till I die.[1]

[1] Katharine Tynan, *A Book of Verse*, 255.

God's Faithfulness.

1 Pet. iv. 19.—'A faithful Creator.'

God is a faithful Creator. That is an illumined and illuminating word. God's interest in every man is the interest not merely of grace but of creatorship.

1. God is faithful in responding to the claims of His creatures. That man has a claim upon God is a fact which ought never to be denied. To say that God has a right to do with us 'whatsoever He pleases' is most strictly and literally true; for God never 'pleases' to do anything but what is righteous. But to say that, because God is our Creator, He has a right to do 'anything whatsoever with us'—anything that any foolish or sinful man might conceive of Him doing,—this is a totally different assertion, and one against which our whole moral nature rises in rebellion. For such an assertion confounds might with right. If a man deliberately puts forth his power so as to torture even a beast, without any purpose except to inflict pain, you feel at once that he is doing wrong—that he has no right to exercise might after such a fashion. And if you could conceive it possible that he had first put forth his power in order to bring into being the animal which he is thus wantonly torturing, your whole moral nature would condemn him even more vehemently. What, for example, would you say of a man who should deliberately hatch a bird's egg for no other purpose than to make the existence of the creature, when produced, one prolonged consciousness of pain? Or what would you say of a rich man who should adopt a boy into his family, and bring him up in ease and luxury and with expectations of future comfort, and then—in mere caprice, without any ill-desert on the boy's part—turn him out into the streets, with all his newly acquired tastes and likings, to battle with poverty? You may be under no obligation to create a new relationship; but if you do voluntarily create it, you thereby bring yourself under obligation. You may not be bound, for example, to marry; but if you do marry, you at once bring yourself under obligation to her whom you make your wife. A husband who deserts his wife, a father who deserts his child, we call a faithless man. But what would you say of anyone who should deliberately enter into marriage for no other purpose than that he might have a wife and children on whom to wreak his cruelty? If you could conceive of such a man, you would call him a fiend! And if a man, in voluntarily becoming a parent, places himself under obligation to his little child, surely the great God, in creating beings that are utterly dependent upon Him, virtually gives them a claim upon His regard and bounty.

And surely God is faithful in responding to the claims of man. The appetites, desires, and affections with which man has been endowed have their corresponding means of satisfaction in the world around him. There is nourishment for his body, for his intellect, for his heart. St. Paul told the barbarians of Lystra that the living God 'had done them good, giving them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness.' And Jesus reminds us that the Heavenly Father makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends His rain on the just and on the unjust. Here, again, no doubt, there are dark and perplexing anomalies—problems of pain and privation which we cannot solve. But we can all see to what an extent the sin of man enters as a factor into the production of such anomalies; and we can readily believe that it has even more to do with them than we see. The unfaithfulness of man to God darkens the testimony which this world naturally bears concerning the faithfulness of God to man. Were it not for sin, all human circumstances, relationships, and experiences would bear evidence—as clear as the light of noonday—that God is our 'faithful Creator.'

¶ How many problems confront and perplex us if we have open eyes and honest minds that would honour God by thinking. There is, for instance, a poor stunted lad growing up to manhood, with its dreams and enterprises, among healthy happy children. His incurable physical defects simply imprison and

mock his soul. His wistful eyes are eloquent with an unspoken agony. He would be a man and enter upon a stirring career but he cannot; destiny has forbidden it, and destiny is God. Is not intellectual thoroughness behind the affirmation upon that lad's lips, 'The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever; forsake not the works of thine own hands'? Is it not natural to assume that the Power who has denied such a boy a career among ourselves, and who has made frustration itself an agent in the development of his longing, has reserved for him opportunities in a city which hath foundations? But physical limitation is a small thing compared with spiritual limitation. Many men and women come into the world handicapped by physical fetters, but many more are thwarted by spiritual bonds. Have you not met again and again people who suggested an incurable shortcoming married to a passion of right desire, whose careers seem to have been decided before they knew the difference between their right hand and their left. What is to be thought of these people? Must they not be left to the care of a faithful Creator? It is only evasiveness of thought—that masked mockery of Christ, who endured the cross to vindicate the love that has begotten and tends us—which declines the consideration of those questions. And such evasiveness Christ refused to sanction for a single moment. When confronted with physical need He simply affirmed the Father. We have a notable illustration of the fact. A man born blind came before Him, and His disciples, in their pedantry, arguing that physical defect was the punishment of moral shortcoming, said to Him, 'Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' The Master answered, 'Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.' Those works, as He proceeded to show, included acts of healing. May we not give this incident a universal significance? May we not argue that God creates souls to perfect them, that time and eternity are man's opportunities, that in all our days here and hereafter we are but raw material in the hands of a faithful Creator? This seems to be the sum and the substance of the gospel. The measure of God's interest in us is Christ, who for our sakes became poor that we through His poverty might be rich.[1]

¶ Columbus is reported to have said: 'I must have another continent to keep the earth's balance true.' And we must have the personal conscious future, which is to right the wrongs of the ages, if we are to believe and preach the faithfulness of God. But we must guard against an impatience which is our littleness. In the immense times of the Almighty, every dark mystery of human being can move away, and leave the 'sky of Providence at last, arching over the soul with not a cloud to dim its stars.' For our present faith we hold it true with one who trusts—

> That nothing walks with aimless feet,
> That not one life shall be destroyed,
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,
> When God hath made the pile complete.[2]

2. God is faithful in adhering to His original purpose in Creation. We sometimes speak of a man as being 'faithful to himself'—faithful to his own convictions, or his own ideals. Tenacity of purpose is often a characteristic of the deepest fidelity. Hence also such fidelity is frequently misunderstood because the very persistency with which it seeks to accomplish its objects is apt to give it a hard and even stern aspect. He may be the most faithful captain who, when the passengers are panic-stricken in the storm, refuses to let one of them touch a lifeboat. He may be the most faithful patriot who, having his own idea of what is best for the commonwealth, dares to oppose himself to the glamour even of his own party. The mother who snatches away her child when it is falling into the fire is none the less faithful because the child—too young to apprehend its danger—is alarmed by the violence of the jerk that has saved it. Your friend who refuses your request, or who does not come to your help just in the way you wish, may be far more faithful in his

[1] F. A. Russell.
[2] A. Shepherd, *Men in the Making*, 253.

friendship than another who at once gratifies your desire, or brings you out of your difficulty in your own way, but also to your own injury. The one man is seeking to promote your true welfare, and faithfully adheres to this purpose; the other man would rather you should smile on him and be hurt than frown on him and be blest. But just as there is no courage so lofty as that which dares to do a thing that looks cowardly, and no love so deep as that which, at cost of pain to itself, will do a beneficial deed that appears unkind, so the truest fidelity is that which persistently remains faithful even at the risk of being thought unfaithful. Thus, the very constancy with which God adheres to His own lofty and loving purposes may be the reason why so many of His ways seem dark to our ignorance and even stern to our selfishness.

Man is created to become holy and blessed in the free service of God. Man falls into sin through the abuse of his freedom. Is God, then, to abandon His original purpose? The artist or architect who has conceived his ideal labours for its realization in spite of obstacles. And will God abandon His design? No: the 'faithful Creator' 'forsakes not the work of his own hands.' He remains true to His original purpose. Humanity, in His idea, is a holy and blessed thing; and this idea must yet be realized. God has not created sin, but He will triumph over it. As man has chosen that he shall not be educated by standing firm, he must be educated by and through his very fall. And so the 'faithful Creator' becomes the merciful Redeemer. Under the new conditions which man's sin has produced God will still carry out His own righteous and loving plans. Humanity has an eternal Head who shall yet be revealed in its midst as 'the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.' The consequences of sin will be painful and terrible; but they will also be instructive and salutary. The organic relationships of men, if they entail disabilities, will also bring advantages. Thus God abides by His original purpose in creation, and will carry it out by His methods of redemption.

And so Adam is driven forth from the garden, which is no fitting place for him now. His expulsion is a punishment; but there is mercy at the heart of it. If he is ever to become holy and blessed, labour and sorrow must now be his instructors. As he did not hate sin, when it cast its dark shadow before it in the form of temptation, he may learn to hate it now, when it casts its dark shadow behind it in the form of penalty. Toil will be a healthful counteractive of lust. Pain will humble him when he is prone to think himself a god. Death will remind him that he has no life in himself. His children will bring him both joy and sorrow. They will deepen within him the sense of responsibility. He will understand God's feeling better, as he looks upon his own babes; he will understand God's discipline better, as he tries to educate and guide them. As for the woman, her motherhood will be at once her glory and her burden. It will be to her as a crown of roses, but these very roses will have their thorns. There must be

> Some pang paid down for each new human life,
> Some weariness in guarding such a life,
> Some coldness from the guarded . . . But—her love
> Shall chant itself its own beatitudes
> After its own life-working. A child's kiss,
> Set on her sighing lips, shall make her glad . . .
> She shall be served herself by every sense
> Of service which she renders.

Thus, there will be enough of sorrow in their life to remind them of their sin; there will remain enough of solace in their life to remind them of the Divine mercy. It was the very fidelity of God that drove man forth from Paradise.

Trust in a faithful Creator is the keynote of the gospel, the explanation of the tranquillity of Christ. There is much gold in human nature, but it is embedded in much quartz. Will God separate the gold from the quartz? The answer in the text seems to have been written for us and for all men. What is our real worth to Him in whom we live and move and have our being? Is it not our frustration, our regret, our agony, as well as

our resolve, our endeavour and our performance? When we seriously consider His judgments do we not believe that the striking lines in Abt Vogler are true?—

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.

A Faithful Creator.

1 Pet. iv. 19.—'A faithful Creator.'

What do we mean when we speak of God as a faithful Creator? We mean that He is true to Himself; that He always acts from a definite purpose of good, to which He adheres.

1. This is so in the physical world. Is not science always reminding us that the whole universe is under the reign of law, that the revolution of a planet in its orbit and the growth of a wayside flower are alike the product of forces that have nothing arbitrary in them? The moon has her appointed seasons: the sun knoweth his going down. The ancient promise still stands: while the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, summer and winter will not cease. Now this uniformity of Nature is but another name for the faithfulness of God. He has placed man on the earth, He has taught Him to cultivate the ground; and when human hands plough the fields and sow the seed, human hands reap the harvest ripened by sunshine and rain. In this way God keeps faith with man; having created him with needs, He gives him the means of supplying them. The physical world is adjusted to his senses; there is food for his hunger, water for his thirst; his eye loves beauty, and he finds it in the loveliness of green fields or waving corn or pastoral hills; his ear craves music, and he hears it in the ripple of the brooks and the song of the birds, and the rustle of the wind among the trees. It has been so from the first, and has continued so from generation to generation, because God is faithful to the creatures He has made.

2. But man has far deeper needs than those of his body. For he is no mere animal, like the beasts of the field, but a living soul, with a deep hunger and thirst after righteousness, a soul conscious of high ideals of duty, conscious too of ever falling short of them. His life is a constant battle with myriad forms of temptation, a daily struggle between the impulses of selfish enjoyment and the nobler instincts of unselfish love and brotherly service. And this is no accident; it is the law of his nature. When a man sets himself to master some evil passion, he is not following a mere personal inclination, as if he were at liberty to fight or not as he chose with sin. He feels himself impelled to the battle, called to it by some will higher than his own; in short, his inmost being demands it. But he did not create his own being. He has been made so. It is God who has set him in a world where peace and victory can be won only by effort and self-restraint. And God means him to win the victory. He would never have imposed upon him an impossible task; asked of man what he could not give. If, then, I find myself in the grip of some sore temptation, God is involved in the struggle as well as I. For I should never have had any inclination to resist the evil, had it not been for His Spirit working in me. It is He who has inspired me to fight and to carry on the conflict; and if, when hard pressed and conscious of my inability to gain the mastery over the Tempter, I appeal to Him for help, He is bound to give it, bound by the laws of His own nature. He cannot deny Himself.

¶ Every human being hath two inclinations—one prompting him to good and impelling him thereto, and the other prompting him to evil and thereto impelling him; but Divine assistance is nigh, and he who asketh the help of God in contending with the evil promptings of his own heart obtaineth it.[1]

3. But this faithfulness on God's part

[1] *The Sayings of Muhammad*, 32.

implies something on our part—a corresponding faithfulness to Him. This is plain from the parallel which our Lord draws between the human fatherhood and the Divine. The earthly father watches over his child with unceasing care, marks his needs, guides him by his counsel, warns him against evil, encourages him to do well by his sympathy and praise. The father keeps faith with the child; but if any good is to come of this, the child has to keep faith with the father, to respond to the father's love. If the child disregards it, if he flouts authority and refuses to be guided by the higher wisdom that is so patiently seeking to direct his way, then all the father's devotion will not avert disaster. That is a true picture of God's relation to us, His children.

God, let thy mighty heart beat into mine,
And let mine answer as a pulse to thine.
See, I am low; yea, very low; but thou
Art high, and thou canst lift me up to thee.
I am a child, fool before thee, God;
But thou hast made my weakness as my strength.
I am an emptiness for thee to fill;
My soul, a cavern for thy sea. I lie
Diffused, abandoning myself to thee. . . .
—I will look up, if life should fail in looking.
Ah me! A stream cut from my parent-spring!
Ah me! A life lost from its father-life![1]

A Charge.

1 Pet. v. 1.—'The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder.'

This is a charge given to his younger brethren in the ministry by one who speaks with singular force and persuasiveness—not so much because of his official position as because he was such a human soul, and yet one who had become a saint by the tender and unfailing discipline of his Master's love. We think of this great elder, in whom the contending forces of light and darkness, heaven and hell, had striven for the mastery—now a monument of the patient and forgiving grace of Christ. 'A witness of the sufferings of Christ'—the heartrending events of Gethsemane and Calvary could never be absent from the Apostle's penitent and grateful heart. It is this man, grown grey in the service of his Lord, branded with the marks of a great conflict, his face lit up with the glory ready to be revealed, who, out of a full heart and rich experience, pleads with the young elders to make full proof of their ministry. Let us consider three thoughts from his charge: (1) The flock; (2) the under-shepherd; (3) the chief Shepherd.

1. *The Flock.*—Primarily St. Peter is thinking of those within the fold of the infant Church—those upon whom the vision has dawned, those who were in Christ, those who formed the membership of these primitive assemblies. But in its wider application the term may be taken to mean all those whom Jesus has purchased with His own blood. Let us, then, think of the flock—that multitude towards which the Master was moved with compassion because they were distressed and scattered as sheep having no shepherd. To us, in its narrow sense the flock means those who are gathered in our Church, but in a wider sense the flock means all those for whom we are spiritually responsible as a Church, every man, woman, and child in the land. For a moment think of the moral and spiritual condition of the flock in our land to-day. Great is our love for this island home, set in these northern seas. We are proud of her vast possessions and of her position among the other nations of the world. What has been the secret of her greatness? What has fed the fires of her idealism and made her brightness radiate to the uttermost parts of the earth? Not her material resources, her intellectual greatness, or the force of her arms alone. Her place in the world of men to-day is to be traced to her possession of those grand qualities of endurance, discipline and righteousness which only a solemn religious [illegible] can inspire. It is this flock, ful[illegible] [illegible]deals, enthusiasms, yet still beset with g[illegible]ve perils and great dangers, that you are commissioned to shepherd to-day.

[1] George Macdonald.

2. *The Under-Shepherd.*—God's plan is to work through man. At the heart of every great movement for the uplifting of the world we find a man. God used a Moses and a Joshua to lead His people from bondage to freedom. He needed a John the Baptist to 'prepare the way of the Lord.' He needed a Paul to plant the infant churches of Galatia and Corinth, and so He needs you to-day to feed and tend His flock. 'Shepherd the flock of God which is among you.' St. Peter's word is rich in meaning. The Authorized Version translates it 'feed,' the Revised Version 'tend.' Each element is suggestive of the shepherd and his work. Here is a wonderful sphere of service. We can be the nourishers of the flock. We can be its defence. We have food for the soul's hunger; we can lead them into 'green pastures' by 'still waters.' We can open up the ways of growth and strength; we can safeguard from peril. There are many hungry souls about us. In every parish there are those who have missed their way, who are haunted with the memory of a sin-stained past, who need the Cross and its message of forgiveness. There are the weary and disappointed, out of whom all noble idealism has been crushed. There is the mourner, whose heart has been torn with grief, and who needs the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Feed the flock. You must stand between the flock and its perils.

What is to be the motive of so sacred and responsible a service? 'Not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; not as lording it over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.' 'No one should enter the ministry who can possibly keep out of it,' said Professor Ross, in addressing the students at Yale. The ministry is not a profession, but a calling. Its quest is for souls, its dynamic the constraining love of Christ. God help you if the day ever comes when you do your work because you are obliged to do it. Your motive must be more than the bare fulfilment of duty, you must be swayed by the master / corn passion of love to Christ and love to men. 'Simon Peter, lovest thou me?' 'Feed my sheep.' The Master asks you that question now, as He gives you His commission. Is the response of your heart, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee'? It is not for money, not for preferment, that your work is to be done. 'Do thy service,' said Martin Luther, 'not for the praises and rewards of men, but out of love to the thing itself, out of joyous devotion to the work which the Lord thy God gives thee.' Not to lord, but to lead. The Good Shepherd went before the sheep. You are to be ensamples to the flock. There is no short cut to influence; you must be first yourself what you desire others to be. The flock will observe what you are, even more than they will listen to what you say. Your life will be more eloquent than any sermon you can preach. The average man will understand Christ only as you reveal Him. 'By manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves unto every man's conscience in the sight of God.'

He was a shepherd and no mercenary,
And tho' he holy was and virtuous
He was to sinful men full piteous.
His words were strong but not with anger fraught,
A love benignant he discreetly taught
To draw mankind to Heaven by gentleness,
And good example was his business.
But if that any one were obstinate,
Whether he were of high or low estate,
Him would he sharply check with altered mien.
A better parson there was nowhere seen.
He paid no court to pomps and reverence,
Nor spiced his conscience at his soul's expense,
But Jesus' love which owns no pride or pelf
He taught—but first he followed it himself.[1]

3. *The Chief Shepherd.*—How can this high ideal be realized? How can you be faithful in your life and ministry? Only by looking unto Jesus, the Chief Shepherd.

(1) Look at Him *as Saviour.* The Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep. He shrank not even from the Cross, to be the Saviour of the world. Have you, with St. Peter, been a witness of His sufferings? Have you ever seen for yourself 'the agony and

[1] Chaucer.

bloody sweat, the Cross and passion,' borne for you? Do you know His power, not only to forgive, but to keep? Many subtle temptations will come, dark days, days of difficulty: keep close to Him, and your path will be as that of the just, which 'shineth more and more unto the perfect day.'

(2) Look to Him as the *One who gives power* for service. 'Without me ye can do nothing.' The Apostles went forth to an age sunk in pleasure, steeped in sin, dead in conscience, bankrupt in spiritual life; they went forth and they conquered. The Christ that panoplied them and gave them victory can do the same for you. What was the secret of their power? They were men 'full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.' 'Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.' It was by the Holy Spirit that the first great triumphs were won. The forces of sin which you will have to fight are strong to-day, but this conquering force, this unbounded and consuming energy, is at your command. Ask for it, take it, use it.

(3) Look to Him *for your message*. Proclaim Him. He alone can usher in a reign of peace and brotherhood. He alone can solve the problems of labour. No schemes of human betterment can succeed without the Spirit of Christ and His Cross. What a revolution would take place in the political and industrial world if Christ were claimed as Saviour and Friend. On this day, as you wait for the enduement of the Spirit, may your hearts burn with this tremendous conviction that 'the acknowledgement of God in Christ can solve for us all questions of the earth and out of it.'

(4) Look to Him *for your reward*. 'When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.' Jesus Christ will come then as the Judge; your work will be tried. According to your faithfulness, so will be your reward. On through the years, disappointments, trials, misunderstandings, failures may come, but keep this thought ever before you—He knows and understands. With Him and not with man lies the final judgment of your service, and He 'will reward every man according to his work.'

¶ Whatever the glory of the Chief Shepherd is, we who are under-shepherds are, if faithful, to share in it. His prayer was and is, 'I will that where I am there they may be also, that they may behold My glory.' What that glory is we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. Paul calls it a 'crown of righteousness.' Peter calls it 'a crown of glory.' Jesus calls it a 'joy.' The idea of sharing the life of Jesus Christ Himself was the one which sustained Paul in all his tribulations. In the Roman prison he kept repeating to himself phrases such as these: 'If we die with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we endure, we shall also reign with Him.' This expectation was foundationed on the words of Jesus Himself. To a company of drooping and doleful shepherds He said on the night of His betrayal: 'I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.' John, exiled on the Isle of Patmos, looking out upon a storm-swept world, the scattered Christian congregations burning like candles in the gale, is not daunted by the present tragedy and disaster, but hears, above the crash and thunder of the tempest, a divine voice saying: 'He that overcometh I will give to him to sit down with Me in My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father in His throne.' [1]

Lucre.

1 Pet. v. 2. 'Not for filthy lucre.'

THE word 'lucre' occurs five times in the Bible, and in every case it bears a bad signification. We find it only once in the Old Testament, and then it is applied to the sons of Samuel, who 'walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment' (1 Sam. viii. 3). In the New Testament the word is used by St. Paul in the First Epistle to Timothy, where he says that a bishop must not be 'greedy of filthy lucre,' and again that deacons are to be free from the same fault. He repeats the warning in

[1] C. E. Jefferson, *The Ministering Shepherd*, 180.

his Epistle to Titus; and St. Peter, in our text, provides the last sentence in which the word occurs in Scripture.

Now it is remarkable that the warning against the love of lucre—of filthy lucre—is in all these cases intended for ministers of religion. The sons of Samuel are scarcely an exception, for they were judges appointed to do right, to see right done, and to administer the law of God. The warning against the love of filthy lucre is addressed not to merchants, not to any order of men occupied in trade or manufacture, but to bishops, deacons, elders—to bishops, deacons, elders, as such, whatever secular occupations they might be engaged in. This is a point to be borne in mind by the minister who undertakes to speak on the subject: he of all men is warned against being given to the love of lucre. How comes it to pass that ministers of religion should be marked out for this word of caution? Perhaps even in the time of the Apostles there were symptoms of this evil in the ministry of the Church, and certainly in after times the evil became so great, so monstrous, that there was urgent need for condemnation stronger far than that expressed in the words of St. Peter and St. Paul.

But the word 'lucre' is not in itself a word of evil signification. It simply means gain. No one objects to it when it appears in another form, and a business is spoken of as lucrative. St. Paul, writing to the Philippians, enumerates his privileges and advantages as a Jew—his Hebrew parentage, his zeal, his strict obedience to the law's commandments; and then we read, or might read, 'But what things were lucre to me, these I counted loss for Jesus Christ.' Again in the same Epistle he writes, 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain,' using exactly the same word which in the text is translated lucre—'to me to die is lucre.'

Practically, the distinction between lucre and filthy lucre has been lost—a curious instance of the manner in which the world unintentionally accuses and condemns itself. How comes this word 'lucre' to be understood only in an evil sense? Is it not because the world feels in its conscience that generally there is something bad in connection with gain? Let the world speak for itself, and it needs no other accuser; its speech bewrayeth it. Its craft becomes mere cunning; its censure turns into uncharitableness; its passion is only another word for sinful thoughts and feelings, and its retribution is nothing but revenge.

1. There is lucre that is not filthy, but perfectly clean. The lucre that is made by honest labour and honest trading is nowhere condemned in the Word of God. The Word of God rather approves of it, and encourages men in the pursuit of it. In Old Testament times especially, God's blessing on a man generally took the form of temporal prosperity—good harvests, abundance of flocks and herds. So God blessed Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job; so He promised to bless the people of Israel on condition that they should observe His commandments. Most distinctly lucre was to be one of the rewards of keeping God's law. A man's moral and religious character does not necessarily suffer through the acquisition of lucre. Job, we are told, was the greatest man of the East; he certainly was one of the best men, East or West.

2. But filthy lucre is quite another thing. Filthy lucre is gain gotten in dishonest and dishonourable ways: by violence, by fraud, by falsehood, by misrepresentation, by taking unfair and cruel advantage of the ignorance or the necessity of our neighbour. And the lucre that is filthy, through being gained in evil ways, cannot be clean through spending it liberally and piously. There have been many attempts of this sort. Of the plunder taken in war, of the wealth amassed through the possession of slaves, of the fortunes made through fraud and deceit in their innumerable forms, much has been given to religious objects—given, in thousands of cases, by way of making atonement for evil-doing. But God says, 'I hate robbery for burnt-offering.' He will graciously accept lucre, but will refuse with indignation filthy lucre.

¶ There are men who think they can buy heaven with their money, and so they endow

churches and make huge testamentary donations! It is our queer modern way. It will be almost worth dying to see the kind of inheritance these capitalists have by such means secured for themselves in the next world. There are certain currencies—such as Turkish paper money—which shrink a good deal in the process of exchange. But this shrinkage will be nothing in comparison with the drop in value which awaits some properties at the exchange bureau of death. Some of us, for our discipline and eternal good, will discover then how woefully we have misunderstood the celestial currency.[1]

3. Lucre is filthy when gained wrongly, and becomes filthy, however honestly made, when wrongly used; when self and selfish indulgence is a man's great aim and object; when it is applied to purposes of corruption, oppression, injustice, profligacy; when it is withheld from those good works which it ought to encourage and to help; when a man makes it his idol, and worships it as his god; in such cases it is defiled and defiling. And such cases are so common that we cannot wonder that in Scripture the word is nowhere used except in a bad sense. And so it is not enough for a man to be able to say: My gain is not filthy lucre, because I have obtained every farthing of it by means utterly and absolutely honest. There is the further question: What have you done with it? what are you doing with it? Are you using it as a Christian man should use it—in providing well for those of your own house; in giving of it to the needy for the relief of their wants; in promoting in these ways the welfare of man and the glory of God? If the lucre, little or much, that we have gained or are gaining be gained by honest means, and is therefore clean, let us keep it clean by using it as our conscience and the principles of our religion direct.

¶ In considering what should be our attitude towards money we have to begin, then, by recognising its importance. There is no blinking that fact. The world is run on a money basis; it is so for the saint as well as the millionaire. It covers an enormous part of life. Man was meant to be a possessor, to add to his personality, as it were, the treasures which he finds in his world. Money touches character at every point. Said Mr. Gladstone once: 'When you know what a man does with money, how he gets it, keeps it, spends it, and thinks about it, you know some of the most important things about him.' So it becomes for us all a supreme feature of ethics. The whole business of inner development, of the spiritual life, for ourselves as individuals and for the race as a whole, depends very vitally on our relation to it; depends on our answer to the question whether it is to be to us a master or a servant; whether it is to control us or to be controlled by us.[1]

¶ A certain fishing village on the New England coast was overtaken with sorrow, through the loss of thirty fishing boats which had sailed away to the coast of Newfoundland. When the full reports were ripe, there were sixty homes surrounded by clouds and darkness. Hearing the news, a very wealthy banker, who fifty years before was a boy in that fishing village, decided to take a subscription paper around to friends of his childhood who had become rich men to secure contributions. He called upon one who after death was found to have been many times a millionaire, a man known for his parsimony. Together the banker and the merchant went over the names of the fishermen whom they had known in boyhood who were lost in the great storm, whose families were in need. Touched by the sacred memories of the past, the merchant at first said he would give a thousand dollars. The mail, the next morning, brought, instead, a letter saying that he found he would have to reduce it to five hundred, and would enclose a cheque within a day or two. Reminded of it again, he answered that he had experienced some losses, and must cut it down to two hundred and fifty. When a week passed, and the cheque did not come, the banker called upon his old friend, but after toiling for half an hour over his cheque-book, the old merchant turned around

[1] J. Brierley, *The Secret of Living*, 40.

[1] J. Brierley.

in his chair, and said: 'I cannot do it. I cannot do it. It hurts me to give.' Finally he took out his purse and gave the banker two one-dollar bills. This financier said that he never passed through a more embarrassing ten minutes, never saw a man more helpless to extricate himself from the toils, and he went away pitying the millionaire, impotent to rule his money, far more than he pitied the fishermen's cottage on the coast of Maine.[1]

The Shepherd.

John x. 11.—'I am the good shepherd.'
Heb. xiii. 20.—'That great shepherd of the sheep.'
1 Pet. v. 4.—'When the chief Shepherd shall appear.'

It is necessary to know what stamp of shepherd Christ is to His people, and therefore we have these three definitions. He is first the Good Shepherd in that He lays down His life for the sheep. He is also the Great Shepherd in that He has been raised again from the dead. He shall yet appear to be the Chief Shepherd when the day of His second coming dawns. We have Christ, then, as shepherd in a threefold aspect. In each text we obtain a different view of this glorious office, and yet all three are inseparably linked together, and no one is complete without the other two. The first verse tells me that He is a loving shepherd, so much so, indeed, that He actually gives up His own life for the sheep. Yes, but a shepherd may die a martyr for his sheep, and yet the sheep be none the better for it. If I were simply to know that Christ was a good shepherd, and that He gave up His life for His sheep, I should know that which must draw forth adoring love from my heart, but I should not know that which would be likely to draw forth implicit confidence and joyous trust. I must know that He who is good is also great, because it is possible to have the kindest of hearts and yet the weakest of hands. If there is to be full reliance on my part, there must be something which tells me that He is as great as He is good, as powerful as He is loving. A dead shepherd tells me how much He loved the sheep, but it is a living shepherd, who has broken the barriers of the tomb, who tells me that He is as mighty as He is merciful. The second text reveals Him as the Great Shepherd brought again from the dead. And the day shall come when He who by dying proved that He was good, and by rising declared that He was great, shall come the second time and manifest that He is chief; and then as the Chief Shepherd shall He give a crown of glory unto those who have been faithful under-shepherds to His flock.

1. 'I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.' In ancient times rich proprietors thought there was no indignity whatever in personally looking after their own sheep, and therefore the owner of thousands would often be found out in the fields tending the flocks. But then, not being able to look after all, the owners were obliged to appoint shepherds who stood responsible to them. They received their wages, and were termed hirelings. Now Christ supposes that a day comes when the fearful cry of 'Wolf' is heard while one of these hired shepherds is looking after the flock. At the first cry of 'Wolf' there is a natural desire on his part to save his own skin. He lingers, however, for a moment or so, undecided what to do, until, says Christ, 'he seeth the wolf.' It is now no mere false alarm: he beholds the foremost of the pack leaping towards the flock. All thought save that of self-preservation flies. He thinks only of his own life, and runs to save it. He argues thus, 'If some are to be torn in pieces, better the sheep than the shepherd—better a brute beast than a reasonable man.' He saves himself at the expense of the flock.

Why did he flee? Christ puts His fingers upon the very secret spring of his flight in the 13th verse—'The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.' We are not to put an emphasis on that word 'hireling' and count him to be a dishonest sort of man, utterly unworthy of any trust for the future. No, the reason why he runs is that he lacks one thing: he lacks shepherd-love. He is only employed by another. The

[1] N. D. Hillis, *The Quest of Happiness*, 157.

sheep are not his own, and, not having shepherd-love for the imperilled sheep, he sees no reason why, if it is a question of life and death, he should die rather than the sheep. Lacking love, he leaves the flock to the wolf. But he is the good shepherd who has such shepherd-love to his flock that when he sees the wolf coming his one thought is, 'How can I save the sheep?' not 'How can I save myself?' Christ could say, 'I am the Good Shepherd, and I will prove it—prove it in this, that I will lay down my life in the place of the sheep.'

Who shall keep Thy sheep,
Lord, and lose not one?
Who save One shall keep,
Lest the shepherds sleep?
Who beside the Son? [1]

2. We come now to the second text and we shall see how the previous one is not complete without it. 'Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd.' We saw Him last as the loving shepherd lying in the tomb. The third day He is brought forth, and in this He is the 'great shepherd.'

(1) He is great in *dignity*. How little did the sheep imagine who the Shepherd was. They were touched with His love, but they had no idea that under the Shepherd's garb there was an uncrowned monarch. Christ's grand dignity seldom blazed forth when He held the crook and did His pastoral work on earth. It was needed that there should be a manifestation of His greatness as well as of His goodness. See how this took place in the Resurrection; for, in Rom. i. 4, St. Paul says concerning Christ that He was 'declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.' Do we see anything of the Son of God with power in the dying Shepherd? Yes, in a limited degree, but all we can see of power in His dying will prove a deception, unless it is corroborated by His after resurrection. Whilst He lived, the Shepherd said, 'I lay down my life that I might take it again'; but of what worth would that statement have been had the Shepherd never come to life again? 'If Christ be not raised from the dead, ye are still in your sins. But now is Christ risen.' The Shepherd has proved His greatness by resurrection, even as He proved His goodness by dying. This vindicates all the assertions He made during life that He would rise. He is good; He died for me. He is great; He rose again. As a loving Shepherd, He gave Himself to the wolves; but as the Great Shepherd who can keep me from the wolf, He rose again.

(2) Again, He is great in *saving power*. The Good Shepherd is not necessarily mighty to save. Too often we overlook the importance of the Resurrection. We must never preach only the Christ who was crucified. We have to preach the Christ who was crucified and rose again. Doubtless you may make people weep, and cause their eyes to become fountains of tears, by telling of the Good Shepherd who died for the sheep; but if they are to understand God's plan of salvation, and have a foundation on which to rest their hope, you must also show them the Great Shepherd, who overcame death. See in Rom. v. 10 how Christ's resurrection guarantees Him to be the Great Shepherd with saving power. 'For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' And in Rom. viii. 34 you read, 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God.' Would the wolves destroy the flock? He has proved Himself more than a match for them. He overcame them in His death: He triumphed over them in His resurrection.

(3) He is great also in *His power to supply*. In Eph. i. 17 the Apostle shows how Christ, by the mighty power of God, has been raised from the grave, and placed 'far above all principality, and power, and might.' Why? 'That he might be the head over all things to the church.' Then He is the Great Shepherd to supply. It is no poor human shepherd who died and was buried in the field and left there that we trust in. It is that Great Shepherd of the sheep who has been highly exalted just on purpose that He might be a fountain-

[1] Swinburne.

head of infinite supply unto all His sheep in all ages. 'That great shepherd of the sheep'—proved great by His resurrection from the dead.

Death and darkness, get you packing,
Nothing now to man is lacking;
All your triumphs now are ended,
And what Adam marr'd is mended;
Graves are beds now for the weary,
Death a nap, to wake more merry;
Youth now, full of pious duty,
Seeks in thee for perfect beauty;
The weak and aged, tir'd with length
Of daies, from thee look for new strength;
. . . . . .
Then unto Him, who thus hath thrown
Even to contempt thy kingdome down,
And by His blood did us advance
Unto His own Inheritance,
To Him be glory, power, praise,
From this, unto the last of daies:[1]

3. But he is the *Chief Shepherd*, for He is to appear again. What was Christ's commission to His disciples just before He went up on high? Having proved Himself to be the Good Shepherd by dying, having proved Himself to be the Great Shepherd by rising again, He turns to St. Peter and the rest of His disciples, and says, 'Feed my sheep: feed my lambs: feed my sheep.' As He was about to leave the flock, He appointed under-shepherds, as much as to say, 'I have shown you how to shepherd—to love the life of the sheep more than your own life. I am now going up on high, but I shall be looking after you. Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. I am the Chief Shepherd, but I appoint you for a little while until I come again.' Then the Chief Shepherd disappeared from earth—disappeared, only to carry on upon the eternal throne the work which He began as the loving Shepherd who died.

¶ The Greek word translated 'chief Shepherd' has been known hitherto only in this passage. Commentators are fond of seeing in this word a Christian invention; probably the word is also supposed to have had a specially official ring. It can, however, be shown that the apostle did not invent, but simply borrowed the word, and that, as might have been known, it expresses but a trifle more than the old familiar saying that Jesus is the 'Shepherd.' A wooden tablet of the Roman period in Egypt, that was hung round the neck of a mummy as a means of identifying the deceased, bears the following (Greek) inscription:—

Plenis the younger, the chief Shepherd's. Lived . . . years.

The genitive, 'the chief Shepherd's,' on this tablet is no doubt simply a mistake in spelling—a mistake that is not without interest for us. The tablet can hardly have been carefully written for a man of rank, but must have been hastily done for a man of the people, the son of an Egyptian peasant, who was perhaps entrusted with the superintendence of three or even half a dozen shepherds. . . . . 'Chief Shepherd' is a genuine popular title, not found in any learned work of antiquity, but only on the simple Egyptian tablet, and in the greatest popular work of the ancient world, the New Testament. The faith that named its Saviour 'the chief Shepherd' placed no magnificent diadem of gold and precious stones on His head, but wreathed His brow with a simple chaplet of fresh green.[1]

Reverence.

1 Pet. v. 5.—'Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.'

THERE is a general complaint in our day—in some quarters one hears it very loudly indeed—that reverence has become, or is rapidly becoming, extinct. The words of Isaiah, it is said, are fulfilling themselves: 'The child behaves himself proudly against the ancient, the base against the honourable.' The sentiment of respect is gone; each one stands upon his own powers and his own right.

Much good never comes from balancing the

[1] H. Vaughan, *Easter Hymn*.

[1] A. Deissmann, *New Light on the New Testament*, 40.

arguments which show that the former days are better than ours against those which show that we are far greater, happier, more glorious than our forefathers. Every man of ordinary resources can call into the field an array on either side which, for the moment, will look overwhelming; a practised rhetorician will be able so to group facts and manage authorities that no doubt of his conclusion will rest upon the mind of anyone who wishes to adopt it.

But a sentence like this, if we felt it to be indeed a command,—'All of you be subject one to another'—would not that be something more than mere speculations about the decline of reverence in an age or a country? That speaks direct. It tells me of a temper which ought to exist in society; but of a temper which is first of all to be cultivated in myself—which cannot by any possibility be diffused through a mass, except as it is formed in the heart of a man. What is the use of talking about the increase or diminution of the signs of respect in one class towards another? What is the use of arguing how far these signs actually mean what they seem to mean? We may go at once to the thing signified: we may ascertain what we intend by our outward acts and tokens of respect; what they answer to in ourselves; what they do not answer to. We may go at once to the root of the matter, and see whether our respect is merely the effect of the circumstances and accidents in which we live: whether it depends on some external conventional witness of propriety and decorum; whether it has been merely taught us by the precept of men; or whether it proceeds from an inner source, and is kept alive by springs which the Spirit of God Himself is renewing continually.

These are the really important inquiries; upon them all others depend. If we suppose that a reverence grounded on mere social arrangements, upon that which has been settled and decreed and has become a part of the traditions and customs of an age or a country, will stand any shocks, we shall certainly be deceived. These social arrangements, these customs and traditions, are not ancient enough for a feeling so deep and venerable as reverence to sustain itself upon; they hang upon it far more than it hangs upon them; they speak to it and call it forth only because they bear witness to something deeper beneath, from which if they are separated all their charm vanishes. And let us not suppose that, when these props fail, the Bible or Christianity can be called in to aid their weakness. The Bible and Christianity are continually forcing this thought upon us, that nothing can stand which has not a foundation; that if we wish any social edifice to bear the winds and rain we must dig deep and build it upon a rock; that the passion of the heart for external things and forms, though it looks strong, is not a safe one—not one upon which we can depend. For the idol of yesterday may not be the idol of to-day. If, then, the thing or the form derives its substance from the mind of the worshipper, it must be subject to all the vicissitudes and fluctuations of that mind, which always claims a right to depose that which it has established.

¶ Reverence is not a question of forms and ceremonial; it is a question of the heart. The head that is bowed before God is not reverence without the heart that is inclined towards Him, and in speaking of reverence we can leave out of our sight the outward form and concentrate all our thought on the inward disposition.

What, then, is reverence? What is its essential nature and meaning? What inward disposition of the soul is pictured for us in this word? When we try to get to the foundation meaning of the word, a meaning which includes all its different uses, we discover that reverence is the recognition of superiority in another. We may put the matter in the words of Dr. C. J. Vaughan: 'Reverence we define as a sense of superiority, not accidental, but essential. We feel reverence only for the sacred—for that which is, or which has touched, the divine.' . . . But the highest use of the word is in its application to all our thoughts of God. For as we recognize His exaltation over us, we bring to Him the reverence which we can bring to no other. All the respect that we pay to those who are our

superiors in wisdom and power and experience is absorbed in this obligation which every man owes equally to the Great Creator of all.[1]

Under Christ's teaching St. Peter learnt that to trust in himself must be his folly, his misery, his degradation; that to trust in Christ was to abide in his true state. It was to claim fellowship with the real Lord of his life, the source of all his powers, energies, hopes; to become the sharer of a mysterious kingdom; to become the trustee of mighty powers; to enter into the reality of his dreams; to leave all and yet to possess all things. But to trust in Christ was to trust in Him who had said, 'Come unto me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.' To trust in Him was to be clothed with humility. St. Peter knew that pride was always near him, that it was his besetting sin; that he could be freed from it only by turning to Him who was as much the Friend and Lifegiver to the most insignificant lamb of the flock as He was to him, one of its chief shepherds.

Such phrases, then, as 'Put on Christ,' 'Having the mind of Christ,' 'Be clothed with humility,' which are often cast aside as mere figures of speech, oriental modes of thought, were the most accurate, the most exactly corresponding to his inward experience, that the Apostle could use. And they are the most accurate we can use. And the more we know of ourselves, the more we shall find in them the profoundest reality, that which meets our necessities as none other can.

A Christian Grace.

1 Pet. v. 5.—'Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility.'

THE Greek conception of the ideal man is opposed in nearly every respect to the ideal man as set forth in the Gospels, above all in respect to the grace of humility; for in Aristotle's view the great-souled man could not be humble. He felt himself deserving of the best, and he exhibited alike in every word and gesture the self-esteem, the pride, the arrogance that filled his soul.

And if this is true of Aristotle's ethics, it is still more true of the great ethical system of the Stoics, later developments of which were contemporary with the birth of Christianity. The claim of Stoicism was that the wise man alone was good, that the wise man alone was free, alone rich and happy, alone knew how to obey and also how to govern, alone was qualified to be a king, general, orator, poet, or prophet: and that, since Stoicism alone set forth the right views regarding the gods, only among the Stoics could true piety be found. The consciousness of humility was wholly inconsistent with such claims on behalf of the genuine Stoic, whereas in Christianity the better the man is, the more humble he becomes. In fact the wise man as conceived by the Stoics was an inhuman and intolerable prig. He was without fault or failing, he knew all that there was to be known, and knew every shred of such knowledge better than anyone else; he combined in his person all perfections, and was inferior to Zeus himself only in the point of his limited existence.

The ground for such diversity of attitude is not far to seek. For a man's estimate of himself must naturally vary with the standard by which he measures his conduct, and must humiliate him or fill him with pride according as he falls short of or fulfils it. And it is just this difference of standard, this infinite superiority of the Christian ideal over the Greek, that gives humility the foremost place among the Christian virtues as well as explains its taking the lowest place among the Greeks; for the goodness that achieved the standard of the Greek and grew proud from comparison of itself with lesser goodness led to self-glorification, and so, unconscious of that sense of dependence and shortcoming which characterizes the Christian grace as regards both God and man, could see nothing in humility save sheer meanness of spirit. Thus lowness of ideal and pride of attainment go hand in hand. even as conceit of intellect is generally greatest where intellectual capacity and aspiration are least. And just as low ideals and pride of self are inseparably con-

[1] S. M. Berry, *Graces of the Christian Character*, 53.

nected, so Divine ideals and true humility are never sundered.

There are two ways in which Christ rescued and exalted humility.

1. He gave man his true standard. He set man's littleness against the infinite height of God. A man is living a pagan life here, now, among us. Wherever he goes he meets men whom he measures himself against, and he finds that he surpasses them. He is the strongest man in the wrestle of business, the quickest man at a bargain, the wittiest man at an argument. And that man cannot be humble. He overtops his little world, and he must think himself high. It is strange how small men can make their world, so that the petty supremacy of a schoolroom or a shop counter is enough to kill out humility. Now if such a man comes among other men better and greater than himself, he does, perhaps, learn what it is to be humble. Only our pride is very ingenious, and we are very quick to find some point in which the greatest of our superiors is worse off than we are, and to hide our imperilled self-satisfaction there. 'Yes,' we say, 'he knows a hundred times as much, and is a hundred times as generous, as I; but he has not my good taste; or he cannot coin money as I can.' It is wonderful how the smallest man can keep his self-complacency in the presence of the greatest. So many of us have some one pet point in which we really believe that we surpass almost everyone we meet. But let that small man become a Christian. That means, let the narrow walls of his life be broken down, and let him see God, present here by Christ. At once all is changed. It is as if you took the brown rugged hill and towered up into the sky above it the white, straight, topless Alpine mountain. All question of feet and inches disappears, and in the consciousness of its littleness that which had counted itself great does homage to the truly great which it has found.

2. The next way is even more remarkable. Christ asserted and magnified the essential glory of humanity. Remember always, when you say that Christ convicted man of sin, that, nevertheless, true as that is, there never was any life that so superbly asserted the essential worth of humanity as that sin-convicting life of Jesus. He showed us that the human might be joined with the Divine. He showed us that from lips of flesh like ours those mighty words, 'I and my Father are one,' might issue, and yet the lips not be burned up in uttering them. And more than this. He showed us that the human soul was worth all the mysterious and terrible redemption of the Cross. Thus He glorified human nature. Does it seem strange, then, to say that by this glorification He taught man that it was his true place to be humble? Ah, if a man must be humbled when he sees God, surely when he sees the possibility of himself there is no truer or more exalted feeling for him than to look in on what he is, and think it very mean and wretched by the side of what he might be, what his Lord has showed him that he was made for. Christ makes us humble by showing us our design. Suppose that I can really get close to the proud, self-sufficient master of the state, the shop, the farm. I get his ear in some lull of his noisy work, and I tell him the story of a being whom God loves and treasures. I tell him about powers meant to grapple with eternal things. I describe to him a love that is made to love the loveliest. I open the gates of immortality and show him life opening, brightening for ever and for ever. I am able to touch the very breast of the Almighty, and lo! the crystal window of revelation opens, and the love of God for this wonderful being burns clear within. 'God so loved the world!' I tell the story of this being, and then to my good friend, absorbed in the low fret and sin and worry of this world, I say, 'This is God's idea of you.' I drop the curtain of his real life for a moment, and let him see God's purpose! Is he not humbled? What 'Thou art the man!' of any Nathan charging him with sin could make his sin seem so wretched to him as this story of himself, written in the bright letters of the Saviour's gospel, even in the red letters of the Saviour's blood? He matches himself against himself and is ashamed. The more he thinks of what he might have been, the less he

thinks of what he is. It strips his pride off him and clothes him with humility.

Let us be sure that there is laid up in the heart of God an image and a thought of each of us, which, if we could see it, would shame and humble us. We go on our way; we sin, and rejoice in sinning; we love low things; we starve our souls, or we pollute them; we wade through mire, and grovel in idleness; but all the while there lies God's thought of us, before which, if we saw it, we must be ashamed.

¶ The Christian pilgrims to the Jordan are baptized there sometimes in a pure white robe, which is then laid by to be used again for the purpose of their burial. They are to be wrapped in it again when they are dead. After all the sins and miseries and vicissitudes of earth are over, they must come back at last and meet that symbol of the purity with which they started their new life. And often with that robe laid up at home, they must stop in the midst of some foul passage of their life, and remember how white it is, and be humiliated. So it is the sight of what God meant us to be that makes us ashamed of what we are. And it is the death of Christ for us, the preciousness that He saw in our souls making them worthy of that awful sacrifice, it is that which lets us see our own soul as He sees it in its possibility, which lets us see it in its reality as He sees it, which makes us put our pride away and be humble.[1]

The Girdle of Humility.

1 Pet. v. 5.—'Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility' (RV).

The Revised Version, in its rendering, brings out more distinctly than does the Authorized Version St. Peter's allusion to the incident in St. John. Instead of rendering, as the Authorized Version does, 'Be ye clothed with humility,' it gives, 'All of you gird yourselves with humility.' St. Peter uses here a very remarkable and expressive word, which describes the putting on of the white apron which was the slave's badge, the mark of servitude. Surely he was thinking about the incident recorded by St. John of Jesus washing the disciples' feet.

1. 'Gird yourselves with humility' does not mean, 'Be blind to what you can do.' It does not mean, 'Pretend to think very lowly of your own power.' A man may be perfectly humble and yet have a very clear conception that he can do certain things much better than his brother. There is nothing in that contrary to the spirit of Christian humility. It is an essential part of that grace that a man should know his own worth, his own faculty, his own capacity. And if he can do a thing better than other people, there is no reason in the world why he should not think so, though it may not be always a wise thing to say it. Humility does not consist in undue depreciation of myself, but in a lowly estimate of myself, joined with as lowly and accurate a knowledge of myself as I can get. Granted that you are superior to me in something or other. Well what does that matter? One molehill is a little higher than another; they are all about the same distance from the sun. I remember a friend of mine who, being told when a child that the sun was ninety-five millions of miles off, asked whether it was from the upstairs window or the downstairs. And that is about the difference between men, if they will bring themselves into comparison with the only true standard.

2. But Christian humility is not a mere lowly estimate of myself; it is such an estimate as leads to lowly service. St. Peter puts it, 'Be ye girt with humility'—the white apron over the rich dress, be it as rich as it may, over velvet skirts, over emblazoned garniture —'to serve one another.' True humility is not a mere sentiment, still less is it self-depreciating talk, which is too often but a trap to catch flattery from the hearer. If it is genuine, it will show itself in counting no office too lowly that may help a brother. 'Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart,' says Wordsworth of Milton, the austere poet, whom many would think of as by no means eminent for humility,

[1] Phillips Brooks.

but yet, as the sonnet goes on to say, 'Thy soul the humblest duties on herself did lay,' and that is the token of genuine humility. It will usually be found that people who think of themselves more highly than they ought to think are slow to use the powers of which they are so proud, for their brethren, and you may be sure that people who think very humbly of themselves are generally the most ready to help all that need help. Humility and service will go together.[1]

¶ One other temple is there in every life, the temple of ministry. It is the place of the higher and the rarer activity, where God-inspired men pour themselves out in service which is sacrificial, where, to please high God, and for His glory, men lay upon their hearts the lowliest duties and fulfil them with a heavenly fidelity. It is the sphere of tenderness and young-eyed love, of the passion of self-forgetfulness, where every heart is loyal to life's highest law, and looks not on its own things, but on the things of another. Dark-browed selfishness has departed, and in her place there walks a spirit of such exquisite sympathy that her very shadow is a hope and her smile a positive benediction.

> Flowers laugh before her on their beds,
> And fragrance in her footing treads.

Hate has been supplanted by love. Generosity takes the place of calculation, and a good done and a good given ever seem greater than a good possessed. The sovereign law is not to get, to have, to hold; but to give, to confer, to bless. And so it is the place of healing, of binding up, of thorn-stealing, of helpfulness, of lightened burdens, of faces made radiant by the sunlight of heaven. It is a beautiful temple. In it walk the great company of the serving-men, each fulfilling his allotted task in gentleness and love. It has a blessedness whose rapture is beyond the utterance of words, whose peace travels deeper than our farthest fathom-line.[2]

[1] A. Maclaren.
[2] G. B. Austin, *Beautiful Gates in Life*, 27.

The Conditions of Humility.

1 Pet. v. 5.—'Be clothed with humility.'

In every possible way, and at every possible point, revelation sets forth the charm and obligation of humility. The New Testament never loses sight of the lovely grace and never fails to extol it. Our Lord, who was the supreme illustration of this grace, most emphatically and repeatedly enjoins it upon His disciples; and Paul, Peter, James, and John again and again exhort their brethren to lowliness of mind.

Humility does not involve meanness or servility. It is not pusillanimity. It contains no element that degrades human nature or exposes it to legitimate contempt. It is not the quality of a slave, but of kings and priests unto God. It is a necessary trait in all finite character, and therefore it is perfectly consistent with an inviolable dignity and self-respect. Look at it as it appears in living beauty in the Pattern-Man, the Model of humanity—in Him who was 'meek and lowly of heart.' Christ was the ideal of man. Our nature reached its acme of perfection in Him. And throughout His entire human life upon earth He was a lowly and condescending Being. Not a scintilla of pride or arrogance ever flashed in His actions. Meekness is the serene element in which He lived, moved, and had His being. And yet, how dignified was the Son of man. The potentates of the world are fond of arrogating to themselves the title of 'serene highness.' By it they would indicate that their exaltation is so lofty that it is unaffected by the contests and turmoil of the lower region in which the common mass of men live. Their position is wholly inaccessible, and therefore their temper is perfectly calm. But what a 'serene highness' envelops the character of Christ, like a halo. What greatness accompanies the gentleness. Even Rousseau, who had no meekness, and no love for the trait, acknowledged that the character of Christ is the most lofty one in history. He thought it so sublime as to say that, if it had been the mere idealizing and invention of the un-

lettered evangelists, they would have performed a greater miracle than even the character itself was.

1. The primary condition of humility is the consciousness of personal greatness. Secularism is accustomed to inculcate humility by belittling us. Its favourite line of argument is to contrast our weakness and mutability with the vastness, splendour, and permanence of the universe, thus subjecting our pretensions to contempt. But to insist on our abject insignificance is to render humility impossible. There can be no sense of lowliness without the consciousness of loftiness—only greatness can be humble. And if humility requires that we should esteem and minister to our neighbour, it implies that we cherish a high sense of our neighbour's worth and dignity. If, according to the text, we ought to gird ourselves 'with humility,' 'to serve one another,' it must be because we are persuaded of our common grandeur, and not of our common insignificance. The consequence of gibing at the vanity, impotence, and humiliations of humanity is to induce cynicism, not the meekness which honours and helps our fellows. Our Lord never sought to humble us by caricaturing us, but in His blended majesty and lowliness discovered the nature and secret of humility.

¶ Religion above all must teach men that they are important in the eye of God, that their worth in the ultimate working of the cosmos may not be less than that of the crowned and coronated orders of civilized society. Any religion that forgets this must be left behind by the advancing regiments of humanity.[1]

He does not love the bended knees,
The soul made wormlike in His sight,
Within whose heaven are hierarchies
And solar kings and lords of light.

Who come before Him with the pride
The Children of the King should bear,
They will not be by Him denied,
His light will make their darkness fair.[2]

[1] A. C. Hill, *The Sword of the Lord*, 167.
[2] A. E.

2. With the consciousness of personal greatness, however, must go the knowledge that our greatness is derived and dependent. The secularist rebukes pride by contrasting our life and lot with the stability and magnificence of nature; but his method is mistaken. Whatever may be the humiliations of humanity, we are yet conscious of our superiority to dust, however it may be transfigured, or however much there may be of it. Revelation sets us before the face of God; declares His greatness, wisdom, holiness, and love; avouches that we are His offspring, and that we have nothing that we have not received from Him; and that He is our King and Judge; and thus our sense of greatness is chastened and hallowed by the vision of supreme and eternal greatness. Abolish God, and there is an end of the humility of men. What authority remains to rebuke rampant arrogance after His fear is removed from before our eyes? Then we are greater than all else; we are absolute masters of the situation; no place is left for gratitude, reverence, or service. Before the face of God seraphim veil their faces with their wings; and in the presence of His glory vanity is shamed and abased. Tempted to selfishness, domination, and vaingloriousness, we are humbled 'under the mighty hand of God.'

¶ Maximilian of Mexico, meditating his future kingship, wrote down his reflections on his prospective exaltation. He pictures himself standing at the head of a long staircase, and looking down on a crowd of his fellow-creatures with the pleasing consciousness that they are all eager to receive from him some sign of approval and promise of reward. In this manner he prepared himself for his coming promotion. Who wonders that his reign was brief and its conclusion tragic?[1]

3. Finally, humility is perfected in the consciousness that our greatness is redeemed greatness. 'Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up,' is the admonition of St. James. We are called to estimate ourselves in the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Created in honour and set over the work of God's hands, we have

[1] A. C. Hill, *The Sword of the Lord*, 169.

fallen from our high estate, and it is only through sovereign mercy that the dropped crown has been restored to us. How much there is in the gospel of redemption to overwhelm us, to fill us with humility. Everything from which we have been saved, everything that we possess, everything for which we hope—all is of the free grace of Him who died for us. Well may we with the elders cast our crowns on the jasper pavement at the feet of the Lamb, and ascribe to Him all glory and praise. These are the large considerations which at once preserve our sense of innate greatness, and yet bend us low in humility and adoration.

O Sun, O Christ, O bleeding Heart of flame!
Thou giv'st Thine agony as our life's worth,
And mak'st it infinite, lest we have dearth
Of rights wherewith to call upon thy Name;
Thou pawnest Heaven as a pledge for Earth,
And for our glory sufferest all shame.[1]

Pride.

1 Pet. v. 5.—'God resisteth the proud.'

Lowliness of mind is the ground and condition of all real excellence. We see this in every direction.

1. The scholar must enter upon his task with modesty and humility if he is to excel; a sense of cleverness and self-sufficiency may easily prevent success. Writing to his son at the University, Sir James Paget remarks: 'I am very sorry for the failures at Christ Church of which you tell. I suspect that cleverness was at the bottom of the failure, for it is a character of mind the exercise of which is so instantly and pleasantly rewarded that the temptation to cultivate it is always present, always diminishing the feeling of need to work with better mental powers for better rewards that are far off. Certainly, of all good mental powers cleverness is the most dangerous, unless it can be held down, even with violence, by some better power, and made a lower servant where else it would be master.' So the sense of cleverness, of self-sufficiency, robs men of coveted prizes of scholarship.

2. How eloquently Ruskin dwells upon the peril of pride in art and the constant need in the artist of sincerity and simplicity. When Mr. Tylney Wellesley, afterwards fourth Earl of Mornington, was Master of the Mint, he caused a certain number of shillings to be struck, on which the letters 'TW' were placed on the lower edge of the Sovereign's neck. George IV. found this out, and was extremely angry. So Ruskin warns the artist against the pride of mind and heart that may betray him into introducing his own vain conceits into his pictures, when he ought simply to rejoice in the work of God's hands, and to give Him all the glory by a faithful representation of it. Vanity, conceit, and insolence in the artist will mar his work, however great he may be. The immortal masters forgot themselves in the glory of the world.

3. And far beyond the blighting effects of pride of heart on intellect and its achievement is its fatal influence on the moral life. Meekness, teachableness, responsiveness, are essential to high spiritual excellence. Just as pride is the root of all vices, so humility is the ground out of which all moral perfections spring.

¶ The structure of the violet is, we believe, the most perfect known to botanists, inasmuch as it possesses all the parts of a plant according to scientific classification, which comparatively few plants possess, whilst many brilliant tropical plants are more or less defective in their organs. As the sweet emblem of humility comprehends all the parts of a plant, so humility itself holds the essence of universal goodness; and he who is clothed with it is perfect, lacking nothing.[1]

Humility and Care.

1 Pet. v. 5, 7.—'Be clothed with humility . . . casting all your care upon him.'

The words of St. Peter about humility lead up to, and end with, one of the most touching

[1] J. M. Plunkett.

[1] W. L. Watkinson.

expressions of the effect of trust in God to be found in the Bible—'Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.' Few sentiments more beautiful than this can be uttered, and, in this life of care and toil, few appeal to us with greater force. To be able to cast our care upon God with the knowledge that He cares for us, how great a relief amid the worries of life! What an escape from the strife of men it promises! But in what way is it to be effected? How are we to cast our cares upon God? It is very well to tell careworn, weary souls to do this, but the question is, How can they do it?

A careful examination of the passage indicates the answer. St. Peter begins by enjoining us to 'be clothed with humility,' and gives as a reason that 'God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.' On this account he exhorts us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, in order that God may exalt us in due time. Then come the words, 'Casting all our care upon him; for he careth for you.' It is evident from this that in the mind of St. Peter the practice of the virtue of humility is intimately connected with that trustful habit of mind which he describes; for he points out that without humility we cannot cast our care on God, 'for God resisteth the proud,' although He gives grace to the humble. 'Therefore,' says St. Peter, 'humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time,' and that you may be able in time of difficulties to cast your care upon Him. Such is St. Peter's simple argument. It suggests three points for our consideration: (1) the nature of humility; (2) the use of humility; and (3) the results of humility.

1. *The nature of humility.*—Humility, like charity, is a virtue which may be said to have been created by Christianity. Not that both virtues did not exist, potentially at least, in man before the Incarnation, but neither of them was recognized as a virtue, and therefore neither of them received any definite cultivation. The virtue of humility doubtless existed, and was often exhibited, in the Old Testament dispensation. There is much teaching in regard to it, especially in the Books of Psalms and Proverbs, and yet it did not form a recognized foundation for the development of character, as it did in the Christian Church.

In the Christian Church humility is clearly put forward as the necessary foundation of all Christian life. Our Lord says, 'Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' And 'Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.' Our Lord not only taught us to be humble, but set us the example of a life of wonderful humility. It was not merely that He endured many humiliations at the hands of others, that He was treated with contempt, and in His Passion suffered at man's hands every humiliation that cruelty and malice could devise; for it is possible for us to endure humiliations without being humble, to endure them because we cannot avoid them; and yet to be quite wanting in the Christ-like grace of humility. Humility is not necessarily what we bear, but what we are. Being humble may enable us to bear with patience and gentleness whatever of insult or obloquy may be our lot in life, but insults and humiliations do not always or necessarily make men humble.

¶ St. Bernard is very fond of using sentences of this kind: 'We are all humiliated, but we do not all become humble.'

We are all humiliated. Experience is very humiliating probably to every single one of us. Ah! those day-dreams that I allowed myself to indulge, kindling a fire and compassing myself about with the sparks that I had kindled! But experience has been very humiliating. Of all those great plans how little has been realized! Of the great things I intended to do what a little has been actually accomplished! Thus it is that life is a very humiliating retrospect to almost all men. Yes, we are all humiliated; but it is a great question how we take this inevitable humiliation. We do not all become humble. To a vast number of people it has the effect of something simply distressing, discouraging; turning them into dispirited and discontented men and women; lowering their ideals, leading them not to expect much of themselves or of

any one else; making them cynical, bitter, discouraging to young ideals. You know the kind of picture of a middle-aged man or woman that one could easily draw. Their cynicism they are pleased to call wisdom. No; we do not all learn humility; for humility is a joyful, happy thing; humility is fellowship with God constantly renewed in hope. Whatever may have been my faults and my follies I can always start afresh. Humility confesses its sins and takes from the unmerited goodness of God the fullness of His free forgiveness, and, like a child, is happy again, ten thousand times over happy again; joyful in the sense that God loves me, joyful in the sense that He gives me over and over again my fresh opportunity; and however old I am He helps me, though it be but to walk the last day of my life in the fullness of my joy and the freshness of my opportunity.[1]

2. *The use of humility.*—St. Peter uses a very suggestive word when he says, 'Be clothed with humility,' or 'gird yourselves with humility.' The girdle was a sort of apron, worn, especially by slaves, to keep the vest clean, and, as such, was the mark or dress of a slave. The word carries us back to our Lord's example on the last night of His life, when He arose from supper, laid aside His garments, and girding Himself with a napkin as a servant, washed His Apostles' feet. It is very suggestive that St. Peter should have used this expression, since it is the episode of washing his feet that is specially mentioned.

This symbolic action of our Blessed Lord was the great example of His humility. Indeed He uses it as a lesson in humility, for He says, 'Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.' St. Peter therefore, remembering this exhortation to humility, and his Master's example, says, Gird yourselves with humility, as your Master girded Himself with the napkin of a servant; wear this garment of humility which is your Master's livery, the sign that you are His servants; and in this you will find your happiness. For He said, 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.'

¶ You and I know that it matters little if we have to be the out-of-sight piers driven deep into the marsh, on which the visible ones are carried, that support the bridge. We do not mind if, hereafter, people forget that there *are* any low down at all; if some have to be used up in trying experiments, before the best way of building the bridge is discovered. We are quite willing to be among these. The bridge is what we care for, and not our place in it; and we believe that, to the end, it may be kept in remembrance that this is alone to be our object.[1]

3. *The results of humility.* 'Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.' In these words, as we have seen, St. Peter draws our attention to the positive results of being clothed with humility; that it enables us to cast our care upon God, with the assurance that God cares for us. But this is not all. There are certain negative results which flow from the possession of the virtue of humility, results which, to a very wide extent, and in a very remarkable degree, make for happiness by removing many of the chief causes of unhappiness in life. We should probably be justified in saying that the chief cause of unhappiness in ourselves is the sin of pride, in others probably it is the sin of anger. That is to say, our unhappiness may be chiefly traced either to our own pride or to other people's bad temper.

(1) Now, in the first place, if we are clothed with humility all the cares which have their root in pride disappear; and their number is indeed legion. There are all those cares which come from unsatisfied ambition, from disappointed expectations, from fretting against the circumstances with which God's providence

[1] C. Gore, *Christian Moral Principles*, 59.

[1] *Life of Octavia Hill*, 307.

has surrounded our life, from setting our hearts on things which we cannot obtain. If we are clothed with humility, if the root of pride within us is killed, all these cares, which are its fruit, speedily die.

(2) If the great cause in ourselves of unhappiness is pride, in our neighbour the sin of anger probably more often than anything else is the cause of our unhappiness, and while our practice of humility will not remove our neighbour's bad temper, yet it will enable us to endure it more calmly, and what is here especially to the point, it will remove, to a great extent, that anger in us which often results in our neighbour's unhappiness. Anger is, in some persons, a root sin; that is, they are of a choleric temperament. More often, however, anger is not a root sin, but is the fruit of pride. We are angry because our self-love is wounded, because others do not take the same estimate of us as we take of ourselves; hence the practice of humility removes an immense amount of the bad temper which so unnecessarily spoils the sunshine of life.

He Careth.

1 Pet. v. 7.—'Casting all your care upon him.'

Many Scriptures proclaim to men the possibility of release from care, but the proclamation brings no comfort to those who have not yet discovered that God is One who works amazement in the lives of men. Some of you have actually seen in a friend the great transformation, the kindling of a light in his face, the awakening of a power in his life; and in seeing that, you have known that what had been told you was true. But though you acknowledged the reality and envied the blessedness of your friend, you turned home again 'dragging your heart along the ground,' because that beatitude was for him and not for you. And so the question remains, how to get something to lift and sustain us in a world oppressed with care.

1. Let us look at this carefulness, which, in so many of us, has grown to be a disease. It was not that to start with, it was not fault but duty; and therein lies the power of the temptation, for we are meant to care, and to care intensely. No relation in which a man is placed can at all be satisfied if he is free from care of some sort. In our daily work we are enjoined to do with our might what is given us to do, to put heart, conscience, foresight, to put ourselves into it; and if we do less than this, we feel that we are indifferently honest men. Some people find it easy not to worry about details, but if no one had a wakeful conscience as to details, what a tangled and ill-ordered world this would become! There are those who forget as soon as a mistake has been made, and thus they stumble on into the next mistake; but the entirely honest man keeps his blunder with him as a fret and spur until he has cancelled it in the only final way, by so mending his methods of work that he will not repeat it. Who would question that the family relation compels us to care? It is, of course, possible to accept that relation in a perfectly selfish and ignoble way, taking the good of it, and bearing none of its load. But, just in so far as our hearts are sound, they will be sensitive not only to what touches our own skin, but to all that threatens those whose life is part of ours.

2. And yet this laudable thing grows to be disease. Our Lord, who knew the snares which are laid for our feet, has warned us that the cares of this world choke the Word; and many of us would sorrowfully join in that acknowledgment. Where the line was overstepped we cannot tell; but somehow our concern for lawful things, like home and business, has grown upon us to the injury of our deeper life. Care narrows our thoughts, making us think singly and intensely of the immediate concerns of to-day; it blunts our hopes, it blinds our eyes, it troubles all our gladness. And yet the things with which it is concerned may be entirely legitimate objects. It is not that the things we care for are wrong things, or that our care in itself is wrong; but there is something else in life so essential that an injury to it is a hurt to life itself. We are here, creatures of little strength or re-

source, trying honestly to bear our burdens in the world, and at the same time called to maintain a fellowship with the Highest. We are living where rough and stalwart qualities avail us, courage, and foresight, and prompt resolve, and, at the same time, we wish to develop such ethereal qualities as faith and tenderness and contrition. The task has proved too hard, and it is the finer graces that have suffered. If we could keep the thought of God with us, it would give us strength to meet our cares; but care first intrudes on our devotion, and when it has spoiled that it presses down upon us, and we have no strength but our own with which to oppose it. No wonder that complaints grow petulant, and greed and appetite unrestrained, and the whole man grows small, and hot, and irritable, and secular. The measuring faculty departs, and we cannot distinguish the small things from the great. The clamorous little things soon drown the voices of the high. For the disease of care is that we forget God's care, which would moderate our own and give us strength to carry it.

3. We grow anxious about the future of wife and child, or about our schemes of social progress, because they seem to lie so singly upon our shoulders. If we do not care, who will? If we are not busy and vehement, no one else will be; and if we should fall before the end is secured, there is no one to carry the work forward. But that, however natural, is the temper of those 'who know not the Scripture nor the power of God.' It was God who gave men that heart sensitive and awake, but, let us remember, He also has a heart that cares. Our impatience about our schemes is due to the lack in us of a calming faith in a superintending Righteousness, and our fears about those dear to us are due to our lack of assurance that God truly is the Father. Nature will not worthily set us free from care. It may suggest that these things are insignificant, it will not give us the assurance that they are considered, and that good and light and love will prevail. Only faith can help us there. 'O Lord,' said the prophet on behalf of his servant, 'open his eyes! And the Lord opened his eyes, and he saw, and behold, the mountains round about the town were full of the chariots and the horsemen of the Lord.' Much of our care is due to a fever of egotism, as if no one were so loving or so righteous as we. And there is no cure for egotism like that which comes from a great sense of God.

Have you forgotten then, My child, that I,
The Infinite, the Limitless, laid down
The method of existence that I knew,
And took on Me a nature just like you?
I laboured day by day
In the same dogged way
That you have tackled household tasks.
And then,
Remember, child, remember once again
Your own beloveds . . . did you really think—
(Those days you toiled to get their meat and drink,
And made their clothes, and tried to understand
Their little ailments)—did you think your hand,
Your feeble hand, was keeping them from ill?
I gave them life, and life is more than meat;
Those little limbs, so comely and so sweet,
You can make raiment for them, and are glad,
But can you add
One cubit to their stature? Yet they grow!
Oh, child, hands off! Hands off! And leave them so.
I guarded hitherto, I guard them still.[1]

God's Anxious Care.

1 Pet. v. 7.—'Casting all your care upon him: for he careth for you.'

THESE words of the Apostle are very familiar to all of us. They are often quoted by us to our friends and we do so with the hope that they will be of comfort and strength to them. Yet again and again, when they occur to us in our own necessities, they do not seem to have the same effect upon us that we had hoped they would have upon others. Part of the reason no doubt lies in the fact that as we

[1] Fay Inchfawn, *The Verse-Book of a Homely Woman*, 36.

have them before us, they do not suggest just the same close and intimate meaning that the writer intended, and this result is due to a certain imperfection or limitation in the translation. When the translation was made the English words had a somewhat different meaning from what they have now, but if we follow the Greek closely and give the corresponding meaning, the words undoubtedly gain in strength and have a stronger appeal in them. If we were to read them somewhat as follows we would see the difference: 'Throwing all your anxieties upon Him for He is anxious about you' *or* 'for you.'

We do not think of God in this way. We never think of Him as having that deep, personal and individual interest in our lives which those closest to us have when they worry about us, or are anxious for us because they see we are troubled and distressed in mind or body. Yet this is just what the writer had in mind, and this is the way he thought of God. There is that sense of intimate and real affection and concern in God's mind for His children, who have so many troubles and disappointments, anxieties and worries which wear down the strength and take away the swift and glad consciousness of the greatness of living.

¶ In Luther's 'Table Talk,' a book which tells us more of the real inner spirit of the man than any other book which was ever written, he says: 'I expect more goodness from Kate my wife, from Philip Melancthon, and from other friends than from my sweet and blessed Saviour Christ Jesus; and yet I know for certain, that neither she nor any other person on earth, will or can suffer that for me which He has suffered; why then should I be afraid of Him? This, my foolish weakness, grieves me very much.' It is not often we hear anyone speak so frankly, and yet he tells only what perhaps most of us are as sure of as he. Our words do not have behind them that actuality which comes from a deep and personal experience or consciousness. So it is also with God.[1]

Most of us never think of God in the tender familiar way that Peter did. We never think of Him as worrying about us or really caring enough to worry about us. To us He is something mysterious, awful, unimaginable and remote. There is nothing *near* about Him; that is, near in a personal and spiritual sense. We think of Him as a great, living, energizing power which overshadows and overwhelms the whole of life. He is behind and before, but He is not, after all, near to us in the same way even that Jesus Christ is. He, we feel quite sure, was deeply familiar with the actual experiences, the poor human foibles and weaknesses, the sins and failures, the disappointments and despairs, the hard trials and the silent sorrows—all the vast, minute and ever changing and ever shifting thoughts, hopes, dreams and sadness of this strange and complex life of ours. He is not only familiar with it, we are sure, but we have also a pathetic feeling and hope that He cares and sympathizes with us in so far as the knowledge of the actual facts of life is concerned. This is what has kept Him through all the ages the one single Person to whom all the plain, simple, silent people of the world have turned with such a sure confidence in His affection. But it has not, for most of us at least, been at all this way with God. We are puzzled and weary with the search for what He really is and how He really feels.

Now if one really felt that God cared just as much as Jesus Christ, and cared in just the same personal, minute way, how utterly different it would be. It would make a difference in so many strange ways that it would be quite impossible to tell them all; but it is easy to see how great the change would be. If it were really true to us, we should feel that God was worrying about us at all times when we were not just what He wanted us to be. If we were hard and brutal and selfish and mean, and what we call cantankerous—and if we thought that this all really distressed Him as we are sure it must have distressed Jesus on earth when He saw the insincerity, the brutality, the wretched and gross selfishness of men, then it would make a difference. No one in the best part of his soul really wants to pain or distress his friends. And if one really felt that God cared in just this way one might go with a quite different feeling and tell Him all

[1] Stewart Means.

these things, make a clean breast of it, put the matter before Him, as one feels sure one would put the matter, whatever it was, before Jesus Christ. And in doing so one might be quite certain that it would meet with His soothing and sympathetic interest.

How do you think God feels about us, about the men and women of this day and generation, about the things we know, and which have the power to stir us even though we are not drawn to those who do them? Suppose they were your friends, your children, how would you feel as you watched their passionate clamour for the most brutal satisfactions and the most wretched aims? Would it not hurt, and hurt terribly? Now this is just the way Jesus thought about God, and this is just the way those who care most for Him also feel about God. God is worrying about this world of ours. He is sorrowing about it just as we are sure Christ is sorrowing about it. If He cares at all He must care this way. And if He cares this way the thing that will mean most for us and also, if one may say so, the thing that will mean most for Him is to have us go direct to Him, not taking thought of any of the things which hold us back but treating Him just as we would treat Jesus Christ. The difficulty with most of us is not that we want to get farther away from Christ, but that we cannot get so close to Him as we wish; and with God that we do not want to get close to Him and hardly know where He is or whether He is at all interested in life. It is the terrible loneliness, the awful orphanage of the soul, that has been the root of all the madness which has set the world crazy during recent years. Let us go back to this wonderful Father of ours and cast all our care upon Him, for He cares for us.

¶ God is the God of *All*, and yet He is *my* God. At the same moment He pervades heaven and earth, takes charge of the sustenance, progress, and growing happiness of the unbounded creation, and He is present with me, as intent upon my character, actions, wants, trials, joys, and hopes, as if I were the sole object of His love.[1]

[1] W. E. Channing.

The Oversight.

1 Pet. v. 2, 3, 7.—'Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according unto God; nor yet for filthy lucre; but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock . . . casting all your care upon him.'

What dispositions are required in order to make the ministry spiritually effective? The Apostle acts as our counsellor, and gives us detailed instruction in the matter.

1. First of all, it must be the service of *willingness*. 'Not of constraint, but willingly.' One volunteer is worth two pressed men. But can men be pressed into unfruitful spiritual service? Yes, men are sometimes constrained by what they call 'the pressure of circumstances.' They say that they 'could not very well get out of it.' They had been importuned so frequently that for very shame they could decline no longer. If they could have found another excuse, another excuse would have been offered. But their inventiveness failed them. Their excuse-chamber was empty. They simply *had* to do it! Their wills had no part in the hallowed service. They were just pressed into the ministry by circumstantial constraint which they could no longer comfortably resist. What shall we say about it? Just this—that people whose wills are not in the service are really not in the service at all. Where there is no spontaneity the fervour is fictional, and we shall never thaw the wintry bondage of men by painted and theatrical fires.

¶ To enter upon the Christian ministry without inclination is a great mistake. It may be said, Then why do it? To this it may be replied that a course of life is often determined in a way which we do not comprehend at the time. We seem at times to move in a direction of which we are not conscious, and are thus led to positions which we have not expected. When we reach certain points in our life-journey, the power of choice seems taken away and one course only lies before us. Friends may exercise an undue influence.

The ministry has often been taken as a last resort when other things have failed. Thus circumstances may control a decision which is consequently not due to the merits of the question. It will be just, as well as prudent, for every student in divinity to try at least to be impartial in coming to a right conclusion in such an important matter. If he is wanting in talent or inclination for the work, he will save himself much vexation and disappointment by abandoning it at the outset. The public is a hard master, and no authority or influence, however strong, will prevent it from consigning him to obscurity and neglect. If he should have the talent without the inclination, or the inclination without the talent, he will in either case carry within himself a growing disqualification by which he will be disabled and rendered unsuccessful. He will labour under a load which is too heavy to be borne.[1]

But there is a loftier constraint than the pressure of importunity and the failure of the supply of excuse. There is the constraint of conscience, which sends men into service impelled by the sense of duty. But even the conscience-labourer may toil and toil away in a fruitless task. Men may do their duty unwillingly, and the absence of the will deprives their service of the very atmosphere which would render it efficient.

¶ Duty, without the inclination of the will, is cold and freezing, and never makes a warm and genial way into the hidden precincts of another's soul. If I were stretched in pain and sickness I would not care to be nursed by duty. All the attentions might be regular and methodical, and yet I should mourn the absence of the *something* which makes the ministry winsome and alive. 'I just love to have her near my bed,' said a hospital patient to me the other day, speaking of her Christly and consecrated nurse. That is duty with an atmosphere. It is duty transfigured. Duty may make people righteous; alone it will not make them good. 'And scarcely for a righteous man, will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.' I do not think that duty will carry us far into the deep hungers and weaknesses of our fellow-men. We need the 'plus,' the gracious inclination of the will, the leaning of the entire being in the line of service. We need to be swayed, not by the compulsion of external pressure, not even by the lonely sovereignty of the moral sense, but by an inward constraint, 'warm, sweet, tender,' the unfailing impulse of grace, abiding in us as 'a well, springing up into eternal life.' 'Not of constraint, but willingly.'[1]

2. Secondly, our service must be the service of *affection*. 'Nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.' We are not to be moved in our service by any hunger for external reward; and do not let us think that external rewards are exhausted under the single category of money. Men may take up Christian service to enrich their purse, to enlarge their business, and in many ways to advance a transient interest. But we may also labour in the hunger for recognition and applause. Which of the two occupies the lower sphere, he who hungers for money, or he who thirsts for applause? A preacher may dress and smooth his message to court the public cheers, and labourers in other spheres may bid for prominence, for imposing print, for grateful recognition. All this unfits us for our task. It destroys the fine sense of the shepherd. It destroys his perception of the needs and perils of the sheep. It despoils us of our bread, and robs us of our staff, and we have neither food nor protection to offer to our hungering and endangered fellow-man. 'Not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.' Do thy service, not for the praises and rewards of men, but, as Martin Luther says, 'from the very bottom of the heart, out of love to the thing itself, out of joyous devotion to the work which the Lord thy God gives thee.'

¶ The reward of the shepherd is that he becomes increasingly like the Good Shepherd, he is transformed into the same image from glory to glory even as from the Lord the Spirit. The minister who watches and guards and guides men, heals and rescues and feeds them, develops by his work the virtues and

[1] A. Pollok, *Studies in Practical Theology*, 40.

[1] J. H. Jowett.

graces of the Saviour Himself. What saint is more beautiful in his old age than the man who for forty or fifty years has done faithfully the work of the Shepherd? One star differs from another in glory, and so do the types of sainthood differ from one another. But for tenderness of heart, and beauty of soul, and Christ-likeness of spirit, what character known among men surpasses that of the shepherd saint? [1]

3. It must also be the service of *humility*. 'Neither as lording it over the flock . . . gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another.' That is most subtle and needed counsel. Who would have expected that spiritual pastors would be warned against lordliness and pride? Who would have imagined that men who are ministering the gospel of lowliness should themselves be exalted in pride? It is one of the most insidious temptations which beset the working disciple of Christ. Pride ever lurks just at the heels of power. Even a little authority is prone to turn the seemly walk into a most offensive strut. But the peril is subtler still. While I assume to feed my brother, my own soul may be a-hungered While I am helping his defence, the enemy may be ravaging my own land. The peril is subtler still. Somehow we come to find a virtue in preaching and teaching, and our preaching and teaching become our doing. Teachers and preachers are somehow allured outside their own message—its evangel and its warnings—and are solaced and soothed by the lonely fact that they have shared in its proclamation. It is a terrible temptation, and, if we yield to it, it swells the heart with lordliness and pride. What is our security? 'All of you gird yourselves with humility.' Put on the apron of the slave! Go into the awful presence of the Lord, and contemplate His glory until the vision brings you wonderingly to your knees! 'Go, stand on the mount before the Lord.' That is the place where we discover our size! No man speaks of his greatness who has been closeted with God. Lordliness changes into holy fear, and pride bows down in reverent supplication. Oh, we must come from the Presence-chamber into the pulpit! Nay, the pulpit itself must be the Presence-chamber, and the man must preach in the consciously realized presence of the Almighty and Eternal God. The Lord will have no proud men in His service. Such men are self-appointed: 'I never knew you.' Their names are not to be found in the Lamb's Book of Life.' 'God resisteth the proud.' He stands in the way and fights them! 'The angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary.' It is an appalling thought: our strongest antagonist may be the Lord whom we are professing to serve. 'God resisteth the proud.' Let us hasten to add the complementary evangel: 'And giveth grace to the humble.' It is the humble, kneeling soul that receives ineffable outpourings of Divine grace. Grace ever seeks out the lowliest.

To the humble soul God gives the very dynamics of fruitful service. In all spiritual ministry it is only grace that tells. Nothing else counts! Other gifts may amuse, may interest, may allure, but grace alone can engage in the labour of spiritual redemption. The servants of the Lord are to be filled with grace, and their overflow will constitute their influence upon their fellows. Out of them shall flow 'rivers of water of life.' 'God giveth grace to the humble.'

¶ How the infernal powers laugh when the preacher, after discoursing eloquently of humility, comes away puffed up with his performance! A famous preacher, and, moreover, a very excellent man, on coming down once from his pulpit was met by an admiring auditor with eulogies on the grand discourse he had delivered. 'Ah!' was the reply, 'the devil has told me all that already!' [1]

4. Lastly, it must be the service of *trustfulness*. 'Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you.' Take your alarms to Him. Talk out your fears with Him. Lay them upon Him in quiet assurance. And this must be done in the interests of spiritual economy. Terrible is the waste of spiritual energy which results from anxiety and fear.

[1] C. E. Jefferson, *The Ministering Shepherd*, 173.

[1] J. Brierley, *Faith's Certainties*, 93.

To allow anxiety to rear itself in the soul is like permitting rank weeds to grow in the flower-bed; and the worthier growths, being deprived of nutriment, grow faint and droop away. 'He careth for you.' In these high matters the Lord is doing the thinking.

Cast thou thy care upon the Lord,
The care that loads thy heart;
Take Him this moment at His word,
And let Him do His part.

The need is deep, the care is great,
The burthen hard to bear;
Roll it on Him with all its weight,
And leave it resting there.

This heavy thing, it is His gift,
His portion thee to bless;
Give it Him back; what He shall lift
No more on thee shall press.

Cast all thy care, and not a part,
The great things and the small;
The Lord's all-loving, mighty heart
Has room and thought for all.

Yes, He will ponder every care,
Consider each detail;
Thyself, thy burthen, let Him bear;
He will not, cannot, fail.[1]

Your Adversary.

1 Pet. v. 8.—'Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.'

'Your adversary the devil.' Who, or rather what, is this supernatural phantom that dominates the history of the world? It is an axiom in human warfare that an essential condition of success is to know the strength and position of the enemy; the axiom must surely be equally true in warfare against invisible powers. So long as our 'adversary the devil' is projected into a theological proposition by tradition, or exalted into a luminous demi-god by the splendid imagery of a Milton, or anthropomorphized into a Prince Rimanes by the powerful imagination of a novelist, he will be alternately the object of ridicule, terror, or admiration, according to the mental mood of the moment. If he is taken out of the mythical, the fantastic, the poetic, the impossible, and recognized as a practical influence in daily life—as a verbal accommodation calculated to express that educative conflict through which all who live to the perfect development of manhood must pass—it becomes both reasonable and possible for man, as the son of God, to 'resist him, steadfast in the faith'; and in resisting, to grow, morally, intellectually, spiritually, onwards, upwards, heavenwards.

1. Two popularly accepted theories may be alluded to.

(1) One is the tradition that the Satan of the Scriptures is a fallen archangel; the other, that he is some powerful anti-God, infernally divine, exercising authority independent of the All-Father. Have you considered upon how shallow a foundation the popular tradition of 'our adversary the devil' being a fallen archangel really rests? Apart from the world-wide influence of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the whole theory depends upon two apparently emphatic declarations in the New Testament—the one in 2 Pet. ii. 4, 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus'; and the other in the sixth verse of the Epistle of Jude, 'and the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains.' These two passages from St. Peter and St. Jude are not a sufficient authority for a theory supported by no other utterance in Scripture. But our Lord's own words emphatically contradict the fallen archangel theory. Speaking in John viii. 44 our Lord says, accommodating His teaching, as He always did, to the standard of the day, 'He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth.' If this be so, he was certainly not an archangel in the beginning.

(2) Secondly, whatever may be the place and power of this kingdom of darkness and its traditional prince, it involves denial of the omnipotence of All-Fatherhood to believe in the dualistic theory which implies Satan's independence of God. When, in the inspired

[1] H. C. G. Moule.

doxology to the Lord's Prayer, we adoringly cry, 'Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,' we with one voice deny that absolute good and absolute evil can co-exist in the same universe, and with one voice affirm that there can be only one primal cause, one ultimate authority, one supreme power, which is God alone. Think what you please of Satan, the devil, evil; believe the worst of their subtlety, malignity, and power; personify them to the utmost; it clears the spiritual air, and simplifies faith, to be unchangeably certain that the thing signified by the words could not be but for the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of the world's responsible Father; could not exist one hour apart from His sanction; must be, therefore, for ultimate purposes of eternal good; and though now permitted to shock, terrify, revolt, educate, chasten, and train us, will pass away when its work is done—'in the times of the restitution of all things, of which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets, since the world began.'

A careful study of the subject in the Old Testament will reveal the Eternal Father again and again taking upon Himself the responsibility for this dark shadow-side of creation. You will read such sayings as 'I create evil, saith the Lord'; 'Is there evil in the city, and I have not done it? saith the Lord'; 'The Lord moved the heart of David to number the people'; 'I gave them statutes that were not good, saith the Lord, to the end that they might learn'—proving that the Satan of the Old Testament is the sifter, the scourger, the accuser, the testing agent, the educator, the drill-sergeant of God's pupils in this school-world of sense and time. It would be possible to multiply instances tenfold, but we may be content with the quotation of one passage in 2 Tim. ii. 25, upon which the Revised Version has at last cast, but only in the margin, the light of true interpretation: 'If, peradventure, God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of truth; and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by the Lord's servant (marginal reference, 'by the devil') unto the will of God.'

It is significant that the powerful intellect of Augustine, strongly inclined as he was by early training to the theories of dualism, recognized this deep ultimate truth—that it is only indirectly, as the Lord's servant, that the devil could take anyone captive. 'The devil,' he says, 'nothing does, nothing can do, unless either sent or permitted.' 'The temptations of the devil,' he says, in another place, 'God applies to the good of His saints.' And again he says, 'The devil, by afflicting, trains us, by raging against us, secures and brightens our crown.' Whatever, then, may be the mystery of the strangely intermingled good and evil in God's world; whatever may be the force of the personal accommodations under which evil is sometimes represented to us, and the apparently terrible preponderance of evil over good at times, one thought should ever be present with us, one clear, assured, unalterable conviction sustain and comfort us—the devil is not independent of God. The victory is fixed, certain, appointed from everlasting. Good shall triumph ultimately, everywhere and for ever Destruction shall come to a perpetual end, for 'Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.'

¶ Said Father Payne: 'I believe in God as the source of all the fine, beautiful, and free instincts, casting them lavishly into the world, against a horribly powerful and relentless but ultimately stupid foe. 'Who put the evil there?' you may say, 'and how did it get there first?' Ah, I don't know that—that is the origin of evil. But I don't believe that God put it there first, just for the interest of the fight. I don't believe that He is responsible for waste—I think it is one of the forces He is fighting. He pushes battalion after battalion to the assault, and down they go. It's cruel work, but it isn't anything like so cruel as to suppose that He arranged it all or even permitted it all. That would indeed sicken and dishearten me. No, I believe that God never wastes anything; but it's a fearful and protracted battle; and I believe that He will win in the end. I read a case in the paper the other day of a little child in a workhouse that had learnt a lot of in-

famous language, and cursed and swore if it was given milk instead of beer or brandy. Am I to believe that God was in any way responsible for putting a little child in that position?—for allowing things to take shape so, if He could have checked it? No, indeed! I do not believe in a God as helpless or as wicked as that! There is something devilish there, for which He is not responsible, and against which He is fighting as hard as He can.'

'But doesn't heredity come in there?' said Vincent. 'It isn't the child's fault, and probably no amount of decent conditions would turn that child into anything respectable.'

'Yes,' said Father Payne; 'heredity is just one of the evil devices—but don't you see the stupidity of it? It stops progress, but it also helps it on—it hinders, but it also helps; and nothing in the world seems to me so Divine as the way in which God is using and mastering heredity for good. It multiplies evil, but it also multiplies good; and God has turned that weapon against the contriver of it. The wiser that the world grows, the more they will see how to use heredity for happiness, by preventing the tainted from continuing to taint the races. The slow civilization of the world is the strongest proof I know that the battle is going the right way. The forces of evil are being slowly transformed into the forces of good. The waste of noble things is but the slow arrival of the new armies of light.'[1]

2. Now turn to the actual words of the text: 'Be sober, be vigilant; for your adversary, the devil goeth about as a roaring lion.' The very shadowiness and vagueness of the popular theories of Satan as a mighty power, not ourselves, that makes for unrighteousness have weakened our powers of resistance, and encouraged us to throw the blame of our sins upon some imaginary transgressor outside of instead of within ourselves.

Bad as he is, the devil is abused,
Falsely charged and causelessly accused,
When men unwilling to be blamed alone,
Cast off on him the sins that are their own.

[1] A. C. Benson, *Father Payne*, 205.

The true devil, against whom we have to be sober and vigilant, is within man; is carried about within the human heart. He is the animal part of human nature, the devilish within; the power in ourselves that makes for unrighteousness; the lower affections, thoughts, and appetites, by resisting which we can alone become moral beings. 'I find,' says St. Paul, 'another law in my members warring against the law of my mind.' 'Nothing,' says our Lord, 'entering into a man from without can defile a man; for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,' etc. The history of what is called the Fall, divested of its attractive robes of allegory, represents man preferring the outward to the inward, the apparent to the real, the temporal to the eternal, the selfish to the God-like. And this is the devil conquering man.

The words 'Satan' and 'devil' in Greek are not names, but nouns denoting a certain kind of character. Satan is 'adversary'; devil is 'slanderer.' In the 1st Epistle to Timothy, 'not slanderers,' the word is *diaboloi*. In the 2nd Epistle, 'Men shall be lovers of their own selves, false accusers,' the word is *diaboloi*, 'devils.' So also when he says, 'Speak, that the aged women be not false accusers,' the word again is *diaboloi*, 'devils.' And it is specially to be noted that the very words of the text cannot, without doing violence to their meaning, be interpreted as applying to any devil but human devils. The Epistle is specially written to warn the Christians how to live and act, that they might, so far as possible, escape the accusers in the persecutions that were about to break upon them. If you will translate St. Peter's words without reading mythology into them, they are: 'Be sober, be watchful; because your adversary the accuser, the man who will impeach you as a Christian before the Roman tribunal, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.'

3. Here, then, is the lesson of the text: Be self-controlled, be watchful; for the kingdom of hell, like the kingdom of heaven, cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there, for behold the kingdom

of hell is within you. Our Lord called Judas a devil, and Peter a Satan, because within them were the qualities described by the words. Every human being who tempts another is a devil, and an aggressive devil; for what is temptation? Reason, religion, and philosophy agree that temptation, for its full fruition, requires the tendency or appetite within, and the stimulus or provocation of the tendency applied from without. Just so far as in the ordinary course of daily life we provoke another to anger, induce another to lie, encourage another to avoid a duty, flatter and arouse for selfish purposes another's vanity or another's ambition, we are acting as a devil to that one. Surely there are so many devils on earth that there is no need for any elsewhere. They who strive once more to drag down the reformed drunkard to his wallowing in the mire, they who make it a positive object in life to pour into innocent ears the foul leprosy of their own filthy imaginations, and to lure unsuspecting simplicity to utter ruin—they may be men of reputation, statesmen, clergymen, accomplished, refined, beautiful as Milton's Satan, but they are devils nevertheless, real, unadulterated, material, visible devils. But the devil from outside would be powerless without the devil within—the yielding heart and the perverted will—to act upon. The sinless One suffered, but never wavered, because there was nothing in Him to correspond with the temptation. The imperious demands of our animal nature represent the devil, whom we are to resist, steadfast in the faith.[1]

¶ St. Bernard writes: *Every one is his own enemy.* Man urges and precipitates himself into evil in such a way, that if he would only keep his own hands from suicide, he need fear the violence of no one else. Who can harm you, says St. Peter, if you have no desire except to do good? Your own consent to evil is the only hand which can wound and kill you. If, when the devil suggests evil to you, or the world invites you to it, you withhold your consent, no misfortune can befall you. The devil may push you, but he cannot throw you down, if you refuse him your consent. How plain it is then that man is his own principal and most dangerous enemy! For we often attribute to the Spirit of God, and often also to the spirit of the devil, that which really comes only from the dispositions and impressions of nature. Every one therefore ought carefully to examine his heart, so that he may not be deceived by his own spirit, which St. Gregory calls a spirit of pride.[1]

[1] B. Wilberforce.

Resistance.

1 Pet. v. 9.—'Whom resist stedfast in the faith.'

How is the devil to be resisted?

1. First of all inwardly. Resist him in your own heart; for far more easily is the outward enemy resisted if the inward man be not laid waste. You know how Scripture dwells on this. 'My son, give me thy heart.' 'Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts'—and all the rest. 'Who can say I have made my heart pure, I am cleansed from my sin?' Alas! One alone—our Saviour Jesus—could say it absolutely. But by the grace of His Holy Spirit His saints and children have at all times been able, in their measure, to say it too.

2. Resist step by step. Resist the beginnings of evil; a mere remedy is all too late. If you have not resisted at the stage of thought, then summon every power of your soul to resist at the stage of the act. Fight inch by inch; fight step by step; if not at the thought, then at the act; if not at the act, then at the habit; if not even at the habit, then, at least, at the frightful surrender—the utter massacre of the last defenders of all that is holy or pure within you. But bear in mind that each stage of the losing battle is more perilous, more difficult, than the last. It is easier to frighten the enemy than to rout him by a charge; easier to rout him than to await his onset; easier to defeat him then than to recover one lost inch of ground; easier to recover an inch than to rally finally the

[1] *The Spirit of Father Faber*, 20.

demoralized and broken troops.

¶ There are many temptations that seek no other room than the space you give them in your thoughts. Kill them by neglect, and let your habitual thinking be always clean and wholesome. A man's foes are often enough those of his own household, and your worst battle may have to be fought in the region of your thoughts and desires. An evil thought quickly ripens to an evil deed. Bunyan, in his allegory of the Holy War, calls the senses the gates of the city of Mansoul, and he tells us what is done at ear gate, and eye gate. The senses are often inlets of temptation to the mind. Curiosity is so strong in some young men, and the love of novelty and excitement and dangerous ways so strong in others that no restraint is placed on eye or ear or mouth or hand. Plato, in his dialogue *Phaedrus*, represents every human being as standing in a chariot, and driving two horses, one black, the other white. The white horse is our moral emotions, and the black horse our lower passions. A capable driver always holds his reins firmly, and so guides his horses that they run well together. How should you drive your double nature? Recklessly and without careful thought? Is the law of your mind to be controlled by the law of sin, and you yourself to be held captive by the devil at his will? If your lower passions are stronger than your liking for good you must always live close to God and thus win the day. If your moral emotions give the lead to your life you must add to their purity and strength as your years increase. Think always on whatsoever things are honest, and true, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report, for your thoughts make you, or unmake you. Think on whatsoever things are gross and impure, and mean, and frivolous, and debasing, and your life will show these things and be shamed by them. Fill up the blank spaces in your life with some elevating aims. Attach yourself to definite work for the good of others. The busy man is never so exposed to the risk of temptation as the idle man. In these days when so many causes are appealing for help no young man need be without a vocation. There is a strong expulsive power in the generous service of others. A youth once complained to Luther that his mind was persistently assailed by wicked suggestions and imaginations, and Luther said to him, in his own quick kindly way, 'You cannot prevent birds from flying over your head, but you can hinder them from building nests in your hair.' Your mind should be as a stronghold into which none but pure and friendly things are allowed to come. Strengthen your line of least resistance. You are half conquered if you begin to argue with your temptation. Smite it at once as you would a venomous reptile.[1]

3. But it seems sometimes that the spirits of evil, as though to induce a fatal security, as though to lull a wholesome alarm—attack the soul, not coarsely and openly, but gently, caressingly, gradually, insidiously. There are times when the devil comes upon us, not with the insinuated apostasy, but with the quoted Scripture; not with the gross offer, but the subtle treason; not as a raging enemy, but as the soft, smiling, flattering, caressing friend. Souls there are which have been overwhelmed, not by the beating of waves and storms, but by the noiseless stealing as of the muddy tide upon the coasts of Lancashire, 'always shallow, yet always just high enough to drown.' Beware of the devil when he steals upon you in the normal tone of a surrounding society, or, still worse, in the pleasant guise of a would-be friend.

4. Resist *in the heart;* resist *step by step,* resist *insidious* attacks no less than sudden attacks And, in one word more, resist *soberly, watchfully*—soberly, because even that which is lawful is not always expedient; watchfully, because the assault may come violently at any moment, may be coming imperceptibly at every moment. However it comes, you will, some day, find yourself, in tangible manner, face to face with the awful final choice between good and evil; and when a soul's destiny hangs trembling and wavering, then even the mere dust in the balance may decide the deathful dipping of the scale. Be sober, be

[1] W. Watson, *A Young Man's Ideal*, 143.

vigilant; have faith in God and in His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and He will give you the victory; resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

The Lion, he prowleth far and near,
  Nor swerves for pain or rue;
He heedeth nought of sloth nor fear,
  He prowleth—prowleth through
The silent glade and the weary street,
  In the empty dark and the full noon heat;
And a little lamb with aching Feet—
  He prowleth too.

The Lion croucheth alert, apart—
  With patience doth he woo;
He waiteth long by the shuttered heart,
  And the Lamb—He waiteth too.
Up the lurid passes of dreams that kill,
  Through the twisting maze of the great
    Untrue,
The Lion followeth the fainting will—
  And the Lamb—He followeth too.

From the thickets dim of the hidden way
  Where the debts of Hell accrue,
The Lion leapeth upon his prey:
  But the Lamb—He leapeth too.
Ah! loose the leash of the sins that damn,
  Mark Devil and God as goals,
In the panting love of a famished Lamb,
  Gone mad with the need of souls.

The Lion, he strayeth near and far;
  What heights hath he left untrod?
He crawleth nigh to the purest star,
  On the trail of the saints of God.
And throughout the darkness of things
    unclean,
  In the depths where the sin-ghouls brood,
There prowleth ever with yearning mien—
  A Lamb as white as Blood![1]

Society and the Individual.

1 Pet. v. 9.—'Your brethren that are in the world.'

THE follower of Christ has to consider his brethren that are in the world. Any dualism between the individual and the society in which he lives is fallacious. Both are spiritual because both are human. The distinction between the function of religion and that of, say, legislation is one not of province—as though the former applied to only half a man's activities—but of method. The Spirit may move from a Christian Society to christianize the individual as readily as it may move from a Christian individual to christianize society. The Church must claim the outer world as well as the inner, for both in reality are inner, and these two are not two but one. Social institutions may be on a lower plane of spiritual vitality than the individual soul, but they are rungs on a ladder, and to divorce them as such on the ground that they are unspiritual is to make them unspiritual and ultimately to react on the individual. You cannot really maintain two standards of morality side by side. You cannot go on indefinitely having a Christian Church in a pagan society. Either the Church will christianize society or society will paganize the Church. Nor can you in practice maintain two standards of morality side by side. You cannot win the individual to a life of service and sacrifice if the environment in which he is set is dominated by a ruthless economic egotism. It is impossible to draw a sharp limit and say, 'This and no further is the sphere of Christian ethics.'

1. But the task of applying the social ethics of Christianity to social institutions and individual organizations will not be an easy one. Nothing is to be gained by deceiving ourselves, and if Christians are candid they must begin by admitting certain elementary facts, because till they admit them they cannot overcome them.

(1) The first fact is that the ordinary Englishman regards business and economic life and industrial organization as matters in which moral considerations and, still more, religious considerations, do not enter, and he thinks they are irrelevant. Of course he is normally humane. Of course he is upright and honourable. But 'Business is business,' and he no more thinks of Christianity involving any particular conception or practice of

[1] Ruth Temple Lindsay.

business life than he thinks of it as involving any particular conception of mathematics.

(2) The second fact is that, with certain conspicuous exceptions, the leaders and officers of the Church almost up to our day have acquiesced in that interpretation of its function and its creed. They have allowed a new province of moral life to grow up—the great world of modern industrialism—without emphasizing that Christian principles applied to it, or stating the way in which they ought to find application. They have allowed the intellectual leadership in social thought to pass into the hands of those gloomy people, the economists. They have abdicated the function of developing a body of Christian doctrine applicable to all relations of life. The result is that the Christian Churches in their corporate capacity have been impotent to regulate or inspire or control the practical activities which form nine-tenths of life, and that when the nation is faced with the need of social re-organization, quite the last question it asks is what bearing the religion which it professes has upon it. It does not ask it because many good men do not believe that the Christian Churches possess any body of social teaching capable of application to the modern world. And hitherto the Churches have done little, it must be confessed, to dispel that opinion. Till it is dispelled they will be powerless to modify social conduct, and they will deserve to be powerless. For only a faith can fight a faith, and if Christians are to make the moral conception of Christianity the guide and regulator of social organization, they must discover, or rather re-discover, what those conceptions are. They must decline to be intimidated by economic expediency into a distrust of their own creed. They must insist that Christian ethics are not the less obligatory because they demand a corporate as well as an individual effort for their fulfilment. They must emphasize that they are not a mere deduction from the Christian faith but an essential part of it. They must claim to try by Christian standards, not merely the conduct and character of individuals, but the social institutions, industrial organization and economic activity which also are part of their conduct and upon which the character both of individuals and of society depends.

2. Nor is it difficult to suggest the principle which should be applied as a criterion.

(1) Christians must judge their industrial organization in the first place by its effect on personality. The sanctity of human personality is the recurrent note of Christian teaching. It is reiterated in the New Testament. It is suggested that every human being is of equal and infinite value, and that even the most venerable institutions must yield when they conflict with personality, because it is an end and they are means. How does our present economic organization stand that test? The very phrase—capital and labour—which is most commonly used to describe the industrial problem suggests that human beings are de-personalized and regarded as on a par with the material equipment of industry. People deplore ill-feeling or express a wish for better relations between labour and capital. One might as well start a crusade to establish good feeling between carpenters and hammers or between mankind and its boots. Labour consists of persons; capital consists of things. The only use of things is to be used in the service of persons. And the business of persons is to see that they are there to use. That an organization of industry which regards its personnel with a single eye to their economic utility should produce poverty is not surprising. But the fundamental objection is a moral one. It is that it leads to human beings being treated as instruments of production; and to treat human beings as instruments of production is wrong. Christians must not allow Christian ethics to be subordinated to economic expediency. Of course, as Christians they cannot solve detailed problems of economic organization. But they can throw their weight on the side of freedom in industry and insist that no convenience justifies any oppression. The besetting sin of our nation is materialism, the temper which condones the sacrifice of human potentialities in its reverence for imposing economic achievements. It is for the Christian Church

to humanize industry by insisting that its final test is not the material riches which it produces, but its effect upon the character of human beings.

(2) It is not only because of its sacrifice of personality that Christians must feel grave doubts as to the ethics of industry. The emphasis which the New Testament lays on the sanctity of the individual is counter-balanced by the insistence that Christians are members of a society bound to each other by mutual obligations. It is difficult in using modern phraseology to avoid misleading associations. But it will not be denied that the ethics of the New Testament are co-operative rather than competitive. 'He who loses his life shall save it.' The Christian life is to be one of service, not of self-advancement. Those who are most impressed with the efficiency of our economic system as an instrument for the production of wealth feel, nevertheless, embarrassment and even humiliation at the embittered social conflict by which the tasks of supplying the material needs of the community are accompanied. If industry were conducted as a social function for the service of society, such conflicts might be surprising. But since it is conducted on the principle that riches belong to those who can get them, what is surprising is not the occasional eruption of industrial war, but the comparative permanence of industrial peace. For the relentless pursuit of economic interest produces industrial war, not as an incidental result, but as an inevitable consequence. It produces industrial war because its teaching is that each individual or group has a right to what they can get, and that there is no principle other than the mechanism of the market which determines what they ought to get. That such consequences should follow from the organization of industry for the acquisition of private gain ought not to astonish those, at any rate, who call themselves Christians. Nor will they be mitigated by well-meaning attempts to bring disputants together, while leaving untouched the fundamental causes which keep them at variance.

Here, again, it is possible that, if Christians would apply their principles to industry, they would find a solution for the problems which perplex them. That industry should be a life of service, not a struggle for self-advancement; that payment should be made for functions duly discharged and for them alone; that it is wrong to take advantage of public necessities to extort advantages for oneself; that a life of idleness on the proceeds of charity or of property is a sin against the community —few would contend that to the Christian such principles are other than platitudes, and few who know industry would suggest that in the world of economic activity they would be regarded as other than the wildest of paradoxes. It may be said that these things are excellent in theory, but that the difficulty lies in their application. With all respect we submit that it does not. For it is not a question of occasional departures from ethics, which are generally recognized as obligatory. Our economic difficulties do not arise because men are men and fail to live up to their principle. They arise because in the past the only principle which we have applied to our economic life is that no principles exist. We are reaping the consequences. And if we turn to the teaching of Christianity to guide us, the warning which it gives is unmistakable. He who loses his life shall save it, and the way not only to peace—to more important things than peace—is not the struggle for gain, on which industry is based to-day, but its subordination to the service of the community.

At the present time the world is listening for such a message. The driving force behind the real movement of our age is not mere material poverty, but spiritual hunger. It seeks not merely greater comfort, but an industrial order which may offer free scope to the development of personality, which may be morally compatible with English traditions of personal freedom, which may be based on service, not merely on gain. What many feel is that they are treated as cogs in a mechanism. What they desire is that industry shall be subordinate to man, not men to the convenience of industry. They are looking for some synthesis of religion with the practical work of industry, which may give a new dignity to the latter by subordinating it to

spiritual standards. We believe it is in the power of the Church to offer it. By re-affirming the social application of its own principles, it can point the way to a society in which men may enjoy not merely material comfort, but spiritual peace, because they feel that their social institutions and industrial organization are the expression not only of economic convenience, but of righteousness.[1]

¶ Commenting on the C.O.P.E.C. Commission Report on Industry and Property Sir Harold Mackintosh writes': 'I am not a great student of the matters dealt with in the report, but that does not prevent me from attempting to put a little practical Christianity into my own business. We need to recognize *the human element in business,* and to-day this is being done more and more through welfare organisations and schemes. In my own business I was taught by my father to look at every question from the other person's point of view. It has been a first principle to treat all engaged in the business as colleagues and partners, almost as members of the same family. . . .

My father used to say that he could worship God as well in his office on the week-day as he did when leading his Sunday-school on the Sunday. We can all do so, provided we really "Love our neighbour as ourself," and have the desire to exhibit that Christian attitude in a practical form. Saint Francis of Assisi said, "Man knows as much as he works," and we only know Christ when we put His teaching into everyday life.

It may be desirable sooner or later that we have a new order of things in our industrial and economic life, but we need not wait for that day. We can put into practice now in our daily business life the Christian principle to which I have referred. Perhaps then we may have no need for risky and sweeping changes.

Legislation may help us, but, after all, it always follows individual practice. It brings conformity to standards already set, and marks the minimum standard, while ahead is the Christian blazing the trail.[2]

[1] R. H. Tawney, in *Religion and Life*, 9ff.
[2] In *The British Weekly*, June 26, 1924.

Suffering and Glory.

1 Pet. v. 10.—'And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while shall himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you.'

If you carefully read the Epistles of St. Peter you will find that their general subject is fairly summed up in the two words 'suffering' and 'glory.' The teaching of the Old Testament prophets, he tells us, was similarly characterized. 'The Spirit of Christ which was in them . . . testified beforehand *the sufferings* of Christ *and the glory* that should follow' (1 Pet. i 11). St. Peter has a great deal to tell us of glory. He has been called the apostle of hope, even as St. Paul has been termed the apostle of faith and St. John the apostle of love.

1. Observe first of all the prospect he sets before the Church. It is a great thing to have a good prospect. Nothing is more animating than the hope which a bright prospect kindles. And what is the Christian's hope?

(1) It is the hope of *glory*. There is 'nothing but glory before a Christian.' It may not seem to be so, but it is so. All the best days of a Christian are to come. Those of us who have travelled far in the journey of life are not getting older, we are getting younger. All the brightest and best and youngest and happiest days are before us. That is more than the worldling, the man who is still in arms against God and His Christ, can say, but it is what every Christian, even the humblest, can say.

¶ I remember being much struck by the utterance of a dying friend, who had, as it turned out, but twenty-four hours to live. As I stood by her to seek to minister words of consolation to her, she said 'What a *life* is opening before me!' Her thought was not of death but of life. Death was at the threshold, but she was not thinking of it. Death to her was *only* a threshold, a gloomy portal through which she passed into life.[1]

(2) But observe, again, what the Apostle

[1] E. W. Moore, *The Promised Rest*, 239.

says. He says the glory for which we wait is *eternal glory*. It is not only substantial, it is lasting. There is a contrast here between the sufferings and the glory. 'The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his *eternal* glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered *a while*'; in the Greek it is *a little while*. The same word was on the Saviour's lips: 'A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father' (John xvi. 16). The sufferings are temporary, but the glory is eternal. 'After that ye have suffered a while.' Are you in deep waters, are you under a cloud, have you a weight upon your heart? Remember, it is only for a little while. Yet a brief space and you will forget it as waters that pass away.

2. Consider, next, the process through which we must pass on our way to the glory. Christianity gives us both sides of human history. It does not leave out of sight the trying, dark passages of life. There are some stories of human life which have been well compared to Chinese pictures—they have no shade. But such stories are uninteresting as well as untrue. That is a very inadequate view of human life which leaves out suffering. God does not leave out suffering. This Epistle is written to comfort men in suffering. The Apostle says, 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.' Do not be surprised if you are called to pass through the furnace. 'God had one Son without sin, but not one without suffering.' 'If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons' (Heb. xii. 8). In a world like this there must be suffering, and suffering of many kinds. But suffering has its solemn uses. Suffering shows that God is in earnest with us. Suffering has been called by an eloquent writer 'God's mute prophet in the body, giving there its mighty silent oracles to the soul.' And how it speaks! You cannot but hear it. It speaks in a voice to which the most indifferent must listen. It tells us that life is something more than a pleasure trip. Pain is a great educator. It teaches us the character of God. It teaches us that God's love is so strong that He will not hesitate to inflict pain upon us; He does not seem to think much of the painful process through which we have to pass (although His sympathy never fails us), if only the good end He has in view is gained. As a wise and skilful surgeon, humane and kind though he be, does not hesitate to allow his patient to suffer if only he can cure, so does Christ deal with us. He is thinking of the outcome, the issue. He permits suffering, though we cry and wince under it and ask, 'Why does this trial overtake me?' It is for the sake of the glory. God takes eternity in. 'All things work together for good to them that love God' (Rom. viii. 28), even the severest and most trying, because He is preparing a place for us, and He is preparing us for the place.

But the Apostle is here speaking not specially of physical suffering, but rather of *mental and spiritual distress*. The trials intended would seem to be connected with the assaults of the Adversary, 'whom' he bids us 'resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.' Trials and sufferings assail us in various forms—mental and spiritual. Each soul knows its own Gethsemane and its own Calvary. We may not always be able to indicate their source aright; we may not be able to say which have come directly from the chastening hand of God, which are the result of the malice and assaults of Satan, and which the outcome of the complex circumstances of human life, but each man can at least fill up the category of sorrow from his own experience. However mysterious trials may seem, let us never forget that they are preparing us for glory.

¶ It is too late to think of pain and care as elements in this universe that cannot be explained from the Christian standpoint. There is a friend of mine who comes often to see me, and he is in continual trouble. He is a learned and clever man, a lecturer in a University. He is continually coming and saying, 'How can you explain pain and bacteria and microbes—this does not mean a God of all

grace?' I try to tell him that it may. There is a discipline in suffering, and it has a purpose in calling men's attention and making them acquainted with the fact that they are approaching danger. There are opportunities on that side for the practice of discipline that otherwise we could not secure. If this world were free from demands for men to take care, what a miserable world it would be to live in. If it were a perfect world you would have nothing to do, and nothing to find out, and all attempts to find out the working of God's ways would be of no use—you would know them all. All those things that go to make moral character would be as a closed door. It is the God of grace that has made us to exercise our wits, to seek knowledge, and to bring the small powers we have into play, that we might become better. That is where the God of grace comes in. 'After ye have suffered a while'—no exemption from the sufferings—He will turn them to some ethical value, and make them work in the formation and development of a strong Christian character. Some of our poets have gone far to the recognition of the leading of the New Testament in this respect. One of the greatest of them wrote:—

Then was the truth received into my soul
That in transcending sorrow earth can bring
Honour that could not else have been,
A faith for Christians and a sanctity.
If new strength be not given, nor old restored,
The fault is ours, not Nature's.

Nature, or the grace of God as we call it, never fails. Whatever failure takes place is to be set on our side, not in any imagined inadequacy of the resources provided in Christ.[1]

3. Consider now the petition which the Apostle offers. 'After that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.' The words are in the aorist tense, denoting an immediate work. The word 'settle' is not given in the Revised Version. 'Make you *perfect*'—the same word is translated in Gal. vi. 1 'restored'; and in Mt. iv. 21, '*mending*.' The idea is that of bringing discordant elements into harmony, a dislocated limb into joint, a discorded piece of machinery into gear; or, in the spiritual region, a rebellious will into submission to the Divine. God wants to do this harmonizing work in us. He wants us to be able to say 'Yes, Lord,' to every dispensation of His providence, 'Yes, Lord,' to every expression of His will. He would have our life a perpetual 'Yes' to His blessed will, not only in prosperity but in adversity, not only in bright days but in dark. It is a high ideal, but it is the secret of abiding peace. It is the Promised Rest—the rest of union with Him who is 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'

I think, if thou couldst know,
O soul that will complain,
What lies concealed below
Our burden and our pain;
How just our anguish brings
Nearer those longed-for things
We seek for now in vain,—
I think thou wouldst rejoice, and not complain.

I think if thou couldst see,
With thy dim mortal sight,
How meanings, dark to thee,
Are shadows hiding light;
Truth's efforts crossed and vexed,
Life's purpose all perplexed,—
If thou couldst see them right
I think that they would seem all clear, and wise, and bright.

And yet thou canst not know,
And yet thou canst not see;
Wisdom and sight are slow
In poor humanity.
If thou couldst *trust*, poor soul,
In Him who rules the whole,
Thou wouldst find peace and rest:
Wisdom and sight are well, but Trust is best.

4. The privilege is great but the power on which the Apostle relies to effect it is greater still. The God of all grace undertakes the work. 'The God of *all* grace'—the God of *electing grace*, the God of *pardoning grace*, the God of *sanctifying grace*, the God of *com-*

[1] R. Waddy Moss.

forting grace, the God of *glorifying grace*. Is there anything too hard for the Lord? Sin and Satan are mighty, but the God of all grace is Almighty. He will 'perfect that which concerneth us'; 'He will guide us by his counsel, and afterward receive us to glory'; He and He alone will give us rest.

There is something singularly impressive in the threefold force of the strong verbs that follow in verse 10. Some have heard in the thrice-repeated message of encouragement a suggestion of St. Peter's threefold denial. That is fanciful; but we may believe that one who had tasted the bitterness of failure loved to emphasize the message which gave the secret of ultimate success. 'The God of all grace . . . shall make you perfect.' Curiously, the verb is found in the New Testament in another connection which brings it into touch with the fishermen Apostles, if not with St. Peter himself. It is the verb translated by the word *mend* in the reference to the sons of Zebedee 'mending their nets' (Mk. i. 19). 'The God of all grace shall mend you'—poor, broken, labour-worn lives, marred sometimes by their own failures, bruised and torn often by the roughness of men and circumstance; there is healing awaiting them, and the mending of all their rents and flaws, and a beauty made perfect when God shall have finished His work.

'The God of all grace shall . . . stablish you.' Here again there is a Gospel echo: the Greek word is the same as that which our Lord used in the charge to St. Peter before his fall; 'when thou hast turned again, stablish thy brethren' (Lk. xxii. 32). The need of this work of confirmation—'strengthen ye the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees'—was abundantly apparent wherever Christianity found a footing: St. Paul 'went over all the country' of Galatia and Phrygia in order, stablishing the disciples'—again this same Greek word. What would we not give for a complete record of St. Paul's methods in doing this necessary work? And yet we know his method, and we know St. Peter's method. They had the same method. St. Paul taught weak-kneed believers to fall back on the strength that was greater than their own. 'Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father . . . comfort your hearts and stablish you'—the same word again—'in every good word and work.' And St. Peter here can do his readers no better service than to teach them to cast themselves back upon the same patient Might, which is able to make up for their deficiencies and to stablish their goings and to let its greatness flow around their incompleteness, round their restlessness its rest. 'The God of all grace shall stablish you'—yes, and to sum it all up—'shall strengthen you,' with a strength that shall wear out the years, shall sustain all the labours of life, and shall defy death and darkness when life is done.

THE SPEAKER'S BIBLE

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER

INTRODUCTION

THE LETTER—ITS CONTENTS AND MESSAGE.

Mockers deride the Second Advent. But that hope is vital to the Christian faith. It is a time to call in the highest witness—that of an apostle who on the holy mount had seen Jesus transfigured and thus had had foretaste of the greater glory to come. So to those who hold a like precious faith the appeal sounds forth in this Epistle to make their calling and election sure—to be steadfast, to cultivate the Christian virtues, and, possessing the higher knowledge of God, gain entrance into the eternal kingdom. False prophets are abroad with their denials, seducing men to share their lasciviousness and self-indulgence. But God has dealt before with the wicked while rescuing the pious, as in the days of Noah and of Lot. These libertines, modern Balaams, are all the worse that once they knew Christ and now have reverted like sows to their vomit. The root of the evil is this scoffing at the Parousia. Men forget that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. But the true believer will look for that consummation, and endeavour to be found blameless in that day. Let Paul's words be recalled. Let the faithful stand on their guard and grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

DID SIMON PETER WRITE THE LETTER?

Of the deliberately chosen standpoint of the author we are not left in doubt. His testimony is to be received as that of an old apostle. Soon to fold up his tent, as Jesus Himself had revealed (*cf.* John xxi. 18), he has his witness to put on record. He speaks with authority: he had seen the ineffable glory of the Transfiguration (i. 17, 18); his personal knowledge was behind the gospel story as they knew it (i. 16); he had written an epistle before (iii. 1). In fact, he would have readers know the apostle Peter speaks.

But tricks of thought and language peep out to belie that assertion. To 'participate in the divine nature' (i. 4, 5) smacks of a Hellenic theologian, and the emphasis on knowledge and virtue betrays the Greek reminting of the faith. Moreover the great concern of the letter is to re-establish belief in the Parousia (ch. iii.), a hope that sickened more decisively after Peter and his fellow Apostles had gone from the scene. The ennui of a long lingering wait had fallen on the generation here addressed. Mockery of the Second Advent was the pestilential heresy that had withered the life of the Church. It is even admitted in a casual phrase that the fathers (*i.e.*, of the Church) had fallen asleep (iii. 4). The Apostles are now as much a class in history as the prophets (iii. 2 RV): Paul's letters were collected and used as scripture (iii. 15, 16). Thus, if the pen is the pen of Peter, the voice is the voice of the second century.

Then there is the similarity to Jude so strong that one must have borrowed from the other. It is on the face of it more likely that

the short (Jude) should be incorporated in the longer document (II Peter) than that an extract should be taken from the longer and be worked up into a unified whole. Again there are obscurities in II Peter pointing to missing links which Jude supplies. For example, in II Peter ii. 11 the reference to angels 'not bringing in a railing judgment' is cryptic till we find in Jude the reference is to a particular episode from an apocryphal work, where Michael, in contending with the devil about the body of Moses, 'durst not bring against him a railing judgment.' The author of II Peter has cut out the reference to such an unrecognized source, just as he omits the quotation from the Book of Enoch (Jude 14, 15). This is the hallmark of a later age, which has defined its scriptures and puts a ban on the uncanonical. Thus Jude is the earlier document, as even many conservative scholars admit.

Now it would be beneath the dignity of an apostle to quote a lesser man further removed from Jesus and His circle. So this letter cannot be Peter's. The atmosphere is that of the second century, and we are not deceived by the fact that the heresies here mentioned are represented as predictions of Peter—for predictions are easiest to make when they have been fulfilled!

The conclusion of the matter, then, is that II Peter is an elaborate piece of pseudonymous writing. And, like the trumped-up tale of a prisoner at the bar, the more elaborate the construction the more flaws there appear under cross-examination. In particular the claim to come from the same hand as I Peter defeats itself. I Peter is written in a graceful, fluent style, while II Peter is turgid and rhetorical. And the outlook is different. 'The part which in I Peter is played by hope, is here taken by knowledge; the sufferings and persecutions around which everything turns in I Peter are here not even mentioned; what I Peter reveres most highly in Christ is his blessed suffering: here it is his majesty and power' (A. Jülicher, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, English edition, London, 1904, p. 237).

But the pseudonymous letter is not a discredited document. Its truth remains just as the wisdom put in the mouth of Shakespeare's characters remains. It is an endeavour to capture and preserve the Petrine faith and tradition and to keep alive sound doctrine and wholesome Christian living in an age when gnostic heresies and other corrupting philosophies were abroad. It breathes Christ and awaits His consummation.

TO WHOM WAS THE LETTER WRITTEN?

There is little to light our path in this direction. The fact that it bears Peter's name and claims to follow another letter that he had written would point to the same recipients—'to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia' (I Peter i. 1). Again, reference is made to a letter of Paul's (iii. 15), and if this is identified with the Epistle to the Romans the Church at Rome would be the objective. But there is nothing to substantiate either of these possibilities. The letter itself bears a perfectly general address, and reads more like a tract for the times than a definite communication to any one church. It has the fervent urgency of a sermon rather than a letter—the outburst of one who is shocked and pained by the sensuality and degradation around him and who pours forth his warning and protest upon all whom it may concern. With the collapse of hope in the Parousia the dams of suppressed animal passion have burst, and with feverish zeal our author rushes forth to heal the breach. False doctrines that slackened morality found quicker reception among converts fresh from paganism than among Jews schooled so long in the laws of Moses. Such a phrase as 'after they have escaped the defilements of the world' (ii. 20) is more apt if used of these ex-pagans. And Paul is appealed to as an authority, and was not the Gentile world his parish?

The whole atmosphere of the Epistle, indeed, suggests that we are out in the midstream of the Hellenic world, and in a Church which is no longer partitioned out betwten Jew and

Gentile but is Christian simply, finding unity of organization and thought through the pressure of other forces. It is ceasing to be a case of addressing this congregation or that. The church catholic looms into view.

WHEN AND WHERE WAS THE EPISTLE WRITTEN?

We have practically answered the question already. The opening phrases plunge us into a Hellenic world. Terms like 'divine power' and 'divine nature' are dated like coins. Dr. Moffatt tells us that they 'were, indeed, current during the first century, but their application to Jesus Christ is strange, and their point is missed unless the writing is placed in the second century, when a diffused Stoicism was predominant throughout the empire, whose keynotes were participation in the divine nature and advance (*cf.* i. 5-7) in the scale of ethical virtue' (James Moffatt, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*, Edinburgh, 1911, p. 360). The conception of Christianity as *gnosis* (knowledge), accompanied by immortality based on false philosophy—that too is not so characteristic of the Church in the first blush of apostolic ardour as in the decadent reactions of sub-apostolic times. Alexandrian influences, too, have overflowed the age from which this author writes, as his references to Lot, Balaam and other favourite characters of the Philonic school and later Judaism show. His vocabulary, again, suggests that of the Greek versions of the O.T. The Mount of Transfiguration has become in pious retrospect the 'holy mount' (i. 18), a sub-apostolic touch. The Church now has its 'fathers' fallen asleep (iii. 4); the faith is a tradition handed down, a 'commandment' (iii. 2) coming 'through your apostles'; the Epistles of Paul are already canonical. Thus we should not be far wrong if we dated the letter *c.* 150 A.D. It was known to Origen and perhaps to Clement of Alexandria.

The place of publication we do not know. If the author wishes to represent his appeal as coming from Peter, the Apostle, he will naturally try to excise all indications of origin. The letter has to enter the world noiselessly and mysteriously. It is intended to arrive, and to be pronounced Peter's, and no more questions asked. Egypt, where Hellenic influences were strong, is a likely home; but many places in Asia Minor or even Northern Palestine would fulfil the conditions.

JOHN DOW.

The Slave of Jesus Christ.

2 Pet. i. 1.—'Simon Peter, a servant (Greek, 'slave') and an apostle of Jesus Christ.'

LET us think what it involves to be a slave. Our pride makes us instinctively shrink from the word. We are almost glad that in our Authorized and Revised Versions (as in earlier English versions) it has been avoided throughout the New Testament. But we have not wholly dedicated our lives to God, we are not doing all we can to tread the road towards full discipleship, until we are ready, body and soul, to accept slavery. We must remember, of course, that because it is voluntary, and springs from love, it is not slavish. It is with this in mind that St. Paul could write to the Corinthians of 'ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.' He could keep it quite distinct in thought from the human slavery of his day, of which the degradation and horror were often beyond words.

We note three chief marks in a slave.

1. Firstly, he *is his Master's property*, and has no property of his own. Everything that the Master gives him is solely to enable him to work for Him. 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive? And if thou didst receive it, why dost thou boast as though thou hadst not received it?' We know it so well, and yet it is so frightfully hard to remember it.

(1) We speak of someone's natural gifts—attractive manners, refined instincts, quickness in learning, power in teaching or speaking, artistic ability, organizing ability, any kind of ability. And we call him talented. But we so easily forget what the word 'talent' implies. It implies that the Master has put some of His own property into the slave's hand solely

that he may use it to the utmost for Him. We are apt to pocket the talents, and think of them as our own money that we have somehow earned and deserved. If we are secretly proud of them our usefulness to Him is at once lessened; and if we are openly and visibly proud of them our work for Him is well-nigh ruined. How many of God's saints look back with an agony of regret at years of their younger life largely wasted, from God's point of view, because they were conceited. For some years they did not know that they were conceited. But when, in God's mercy, they found it out—perhaps someone told them, kindly or otherwise—it took years more of struggle and frequent failure and resentment against themselves before they could break the chains, and live in the realization that they had literally nothing to be conceited about, because all their talents were only talents entrusted to them as slaves of God.

¶ The man of talent may be compared to a musical instrument which gives forth sweet sounds unconsciously. There is no merit in the instrument; the merit is with the maker of the instrument.[1]

(2) And if our talents are His, our time also is His. Every minute that we waste, we are wasting what is not our own. Time is His, for it is an earthly expression of His eternity. That is the only safeguard in the matter of recreation and sleep. Since recreation, physical and mental, and sleep are necessary, they are from God, 'who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.' But they must be, in kind and extent, only such as will make us more fit to serve Him.

¶ Charles Darwin's son says of his father: 'One of his characteristic traits was his respect for time. He never for a moment forgot how valuable a thing it was. He economised every minute. He never lost even a few moments which he had on his hands by imagining that it was hardly worth while to begin to work. . . . He did everything very rapidly and with a sort of repressed ardour.'[2]

(3) And because He has given us our bodies, every physical need and desire is a talent. And if we are to trade with the same, if we are to make the best use of them for His service, it is our bounden duty to decide which of them He wants us to gratify, and which to keep under restraint by a strong self-discipline. The one thing to remember is, 'Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: (like a slave): therefore glorify God in your body.'

¶ We look upon the body with respect, as, in its proper use, the temple of the Holy Ghost. We say, 'The body is in this world the outward expression of yourself; the servant, the instrument of the mind and spirit; it is your privilege and business to make it a useful servant.' Our highest ideal would be a Greek statue, with every muscle and sinew in proper order and harmony, inhabited by a Christian soul. We are to keep our bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity; and for this end manly strenuous exercise is a most effective means. We are to be ready to endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; and if so, we must have something of the muscle and nerve of the hardy fishermen and operatives whom He gathered round Him, ready to undergo for His sake long years of toil, poverty, and fatigue. We all need recreation or the renovation of the powers of the mind; and unquestionably, the best way to get it is the healthy filling up of vacant hours with vigorous exercise out of doors. It is therefore an unfounded libel to say that those who try to help you to lead a Christian life wish you to be milksops, always engaged in prayer-meetings and the singing of psalms. There is a time for everything, and religious devotions have their necessary and proper place in our lives. But the truest and best friends of young men lay great stress on your clubs for football, cricket, swimming, rowing, athletic sports, gymnastics, boxing, fencing, and every other kind of manly exercise. After harassed hours of close and prolonged work indoors, nothing so promotes sound and wholesome sleep—the blessed barrier between day and day, the restorer of tired nerves. There is no better means of maintaining manly vigour in the race of life. In everything it is your business

[1] T. T. Lynch.
[2] C. F. Walpole, *The Building of Personality*, 29.

to make the best of the gifts bestowed on you by Almighty God.[1]

2. A second characteristic of a slave is that he *works without pay*. It is an interesting piece of Bible study to go through the Gospels noting what our Lord says about Divine rewards. He appears to say two opposite things. In some passages He speaks in ordinary Jewish metaphors: 'Thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly'; and the payment is pictured as a strict equivalent for something that man has done: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy'; 'Whoso confesseth me before men, I will confess him before my Father.' Or it is a strict compensation for a loss or self-sacrifice: 'He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it'; 'Go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher.' It is even represented sometimes as graduated according to the success with which a duty is performed: 'I will make thee ruler over ten cities; I will make thee ruler over five cities.'

But, on the other hand, our Lord says things which do away with the idea of reward altogether. Whatever His slave receives, it is 'not of this world' at all; the whole conception is at once transferred into a spiritual region. The 'reward' is the Kingdom of Heaven, with all that it involves; the poor in spirit receive the Kingdom of Heaven, and the pure in heart shall see God; the two are identical. It is not a reward, but an infinite gift, far out of proportion to anything that man can do to earn it. And so, since it is a matter not of quantity but of quality, it is the same for all: the slave who made five talents, and the slave who made two, each entered into the joy of his Lord; and all the labourers in the vineyard received the same wage. Everyone who has made any sacrifice in this life for Christ's sake shall receive a hundredfold more, and shall (in fact) inherit eternal life. And the climax is reached in the picture of the Master who finds His slaves faithfully watching: 'Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them.' Utterly undeserved mercy. The slave gets no pay, but the Master pours out upon him from the ocean of His love a gift that cannot be measured or conceived.

But how do we stand with regard to this? Many of us are so proud and self-centred that we long to get some pay, now, at once, for our small work. We often want three different kinds of pay; and our poor little vanity is wounded and hurt if we do not get them.

(1) We are apt to enjoy the pay of self-satisfaction. When we have said or done something good, or managed not to say or do something bad, we think it over afterwards, and feel so pleased with ourselves: How good, or pious, or unselfish, or thoughtful I was! What a help I must have been to So-and-so! How well that sounded! What an impression I made! And when we do that, we handle what was originally beautiful in God's sight, and make it ugly.

(2) And we hanker after the pay of visible and immediate success. Success, first in our own inner life. When we fail, and the resolutions that we made crumble into dust at the touch of temptation, we so easily grow weary of trying; we blame circumstances, we blame something or somebody, almost anything, instead of simply blaming ourselves, our own weakness, forgetfulness, laziness, cowardice. To be cast down by failure is pride. If we were really humble, we should be content to say, 'I failed again, because I was not living close enough to the Divine help, and because I did not rouse my will to fight; and therefore of course I failed. I must start again in penitence to get nearer to God.' A thousand failures ought only to make us a thousand times more humble.

But we long for success also in our work for others. It is all too easy to be self-deceived, and to persuade ourselves that we want success for God's glory, when we really want it for our own. Visible success is a luxury, and therefore a snare, which we are often far better without. It is a safeguard to remember that we are only instruments, implements,

[1] W. M. Sinclair, *A Young Man's Life*, 30.

tools, for the building of God's temple. Some people are like the tools fitted for the delicate and delightful work of carving or painting. They have the joy, by their very touch, of converting and beautifying souls. Some, who are able to start great schemes and engineer important movements, are like the powerful cranes that lift masses of masonry into their places. But others, and probably we among them, are to do spade work in digging foundations; or we are to be like the humble trowel that slowly adds brick after brick, or the humble hammer that patiently hits nail after nail, or the humble nail itself, firmly fixed in a sure place, invisible, but doing one little piece of work well.

(3) Lower than the desire for self-satisfaction or for success is the desire for praise, and thanks, and open appreciation. If the praise that others give us is mistaken, or exaggerated, or even insincere, we are still tempted to like it. We are tempted to leave undone duties that will not be noticed, and to prefer those that will get praise. We are tempted to be elated with praise, and depressed if we don't get it. 'How can ye believe that receive glory one of another, and the glory that comes from the only God ye seek not?' 'All their works they do for to be seen of men; verily I say unto you, they have their reward.' 'They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' They have got what they wanted, and will get nothing further. If we have done something for God, that is, if God has used us as His instruments, and someone praises or thanks us, we have the Lord's own example what to do with it: 'I receive not glory from men,' I refuse to appropriate it if it comes, I hand it straight on to God my Father, because it is His and not mine. Think also of the Apostles: 'Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?' 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.'

3. A third characteristic of a slave is *sheer obedience*. Readers of Fogazzaro's novel *The Saint* will remember how it pictures the magnetic, drawing power of selflessness. In the hardest moments of his life, when he was called to do things from which mind and body shrank, Benedetto heard the words *Magister adest, et vocat te*—'The Master is at hand and calleth thee.' Selfless obedience, without hesitation or reservation, simply because the Master is calling—that is what makes a saint. The slave of a human master renders obedience under force; but selfless obedience to Christ has the glory of being voluntary. It makes the human vessel 'useful for the Master.'

And besides the extraordinary power which it exercises upon others, it brings peace to the slave himself. It is the inspiration of 'drudgery.' The word ought not to exist in the Christian's vocabulary; it is only the work to which the Master calls him. He is 'a vessel unto honour,' and the harder the work the higher the honour. Selflessness sheds a radiance upon the most obscure, out-of-the-way, humble tasks and positions. It transfigures life in times of anguish. 'Lo, I am come to do thy will, O God.' If Thy will appoints for me years of dull monotony, if Thy will forbids me some class of work for which I think I am much more suited than for my present work, if Thy will is that I should see others honoured, liked, promoted, while I remain unnoticed and unknown, if Thy will gives me physical weakness or pain, mental sorrow or anxiety,—'Lo, I am come to do thy will'; that is all I am here for. 'Behold, the slave of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.' 'In His will is our peace.' Selflessness brings the peace of God which passeth all understanding, because there is no self left to be disturbed.

¶ Thomas à Kempis belonged to an order whose characteristic was self-effacement—the elimination of self in work. To him the universal was everything and the individual as nothing in its presence. These two mottoes express his spirit and aim: 'Love to be unknown and to be little esteemed.' 'If you wish to be divine, remain hidden as God.'[1]

[1] D. Butler, *Thomas á Kempis: A Religious Study*, 30.

Precious Faith.

2 Pet. i. 1.—'To them that have attained like precious faith with us.'

WHY *precious* faith? Because it is highly esteemed by those who possess it. And why is it highly esteemed? Because it makes them rich. Rich in this world? Yes, though not necessarily with this world's goods. But chiefly rich in the world that is above and beyond this world. According to the teaching of the New Testament a poor man is one whose inheritance, whether great or small, is in this world. On the other hand, a rich man is one who is superior to this world's fortune. And the very reason why he cares comparatively little about his worldly estate is because he is a rich man. He is 'rich in faith.' Let who will doubt the reality of this wealth, it is essential wealth. The doubters are doubters because they are not possessors. No one who has faith doubts his wealth. It is impossible to compare worldly possessions with faith. Faith, if it be only as a grain of mustard-seed, is a point of reality, but the world is vanity. It is not the pious theorist, but the royal experimentalist, the inductive philosopher, who cries out, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' No man is strong, no man is wise, no man is rich compared with the man who has New Testament faith. Faith makes a man at once master of this world and the heir of Heaven. Words cannot represent the wealth of faith.

Well might the writer say, 'precious faith.' It brings another world into this. It opens rivers of consolation in the parched desert. It brings the fruits of Paradise to the soul. It is light in the darkest hour, and peace in the wildest storm. Under deep poverty and tribulation, Jesus whispers in the ear of faith: 'Thou art rich.' 'I know thy tribulation and poverty; but thou art rich' (Rev. xi. 9). In a world of change and sorrow we want the stay of a strong arm, and the comfort of an unchangeable sweetness. We find this strong arm and this Divine sweetness in faith.

But this is a world of shadows as well as trials. Indeed, how could a real world be a tried world? But a world in which the unreal is taken for the real ought to be a world of sorrow. Change, decay, and suffering, which, in an unreal world, are inevitable, are turned to good account; they help man to die to the unreal world, that, by a new birth, he may be brought into the world of faith. Faith saves us from being befooled and ruined in this world of shadows. Faith is the victory which overcometh the world. One beam of absolute truth detects the consummate plausibility of 'things seen.' Faith is such a beam of truth in the soul. With the ease of an instinct faith accomplishes, if not the impossibility, the contradiction, of not looking at things seen, but of looking at things not seen. Faith is like one who sees not what he sees, because he sees so fully what he sees not. If an inferior thing be visible, and a superior invisible, it is important that there should be in us some eye which shall behold the invisible. Faith is that eye. Our sight blinds us till faith comes. The world is more than a match for the soul, if the light and life of faith be not there. Through the senses and the natural affections the world presses home its claims, and the pleading is so successful that the soul turns pleader with herself on behalf of the outer life. Do we not want a commanding faith, that we may not be like feathers carried down by the world-stream, but that the stream may sweep against us, around us, and past us, this way and that, but not move us? Faith is the master of the world-tide, for it is anchored to the Rock of Ages. It is the very pillar and ground of eternal truth in us; 'precious faith.'

Now God forbid that Faith be built on dates,
  Cursive or uncial letters, scribe or gloss,
What one conjectures, proves, or demonstrates:
    This were the loss
Of all to which God bids that man aspire,
This were the death of life, quenching of fire.

Nay, but with Faith I see. Not even Hope,
  Her glorious sister, stands so high as she.

For this but stands expectant on the slope
That leads where He
Her source and consummation sets His seat,
Where Faith dwells always to caress His Feet.

. . . . . .

Nay, but with Faith I sought my Lord last night,
And found Him shining where the lamp was dim;
The shadowy altar glimmered, height on height,
A throne for Him:
Seen as through lattice work His gracious Face
Looked forth on me and filled the dark with grace.

Nay then, if proof and tortured argument
Content thee—teach thee that the Lord is there,
Or risen again; I pray thee be content,
But leave me here
With eye unsealed by any proof of thine,
With eye unsealed to know the Lord is mine.[1]

A Christian Watchword.

2 Pet. i. 1, 2.—'Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.'

HERE is the secret of liberty: 'A bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ.' And here is the basis of equality: 'They that have obtained an equally precious faith with us.' And here is the very genius of fraternity: 'Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.' Here, then, we have the apostolic evangel of liberty, equality, and fraternity.

1. Here is the secret of *liberty:* 'A bondslave of Jesus.' At the heart of all true freedom there is a certain bondage. Liberty without restraint is always self-destructive. The man who will not be bound to anything or anybody is always the most enslaved. Even anarchist societies are compelled to have some rules, and the making of a rule always implies the forging of a chain. Liberty must be limited if it is to be possessed. Every type of freedom has its chains.

(1) That is true of *intellectual freedom.* A man who would be intellectually free must pay obeisance to certain laws of thought. Mental disorder is a dark enslavement. The movement that springs from obedience to the laws of thought is a fruitful freedom. Free thought begins in wearing a chain; the mental freeman is at heart a slave.

(2) That is true also of *political freedom.* Political freedom consists in the recognition of individual rights. To assert my brother's rights is to state a limit to my own. Here again we start with a chain. We recognize limitations. The real political freeman is at heart a slave.

(3) And that is true also of *moral freedom;* no man is morally free who does not pay homage to his conscience. Moral freedom springs from the sense of obligation. Apart from that ligament, that bond, the whole body of the moral life falls limb from limb in inextricable chaos and confusion.

(4) Now let us lift the argument up to the highest type of freedom, the glorious *freedom of the spirit.* A great writer has defined the French notion of liberty as political economy and the English notion of liberty as personal independence. The Christian conception of liberty is inclusive of these, but infinitely greater. The most spacious of all liberties is liberation from self, and this kind of freedom springs from initial bondage. True freedom in the spirit begins in bondage to the Lord of Life.

Even so, Father! Let Thy will be done;
Turn and o'erturn, end what Thou hast begun
In judgment or in mercy: as for me,
If but the least and frailest, let me be
Evermore numbered with the truly free
Who find Thy service perfect liberty![1]

2. And here we have the basis of *equality:* 'To them that have obtained an equally pre-

[1] R. H. Benson.

[1] Whittier.

cious faith with us in the righteousness of our God.' Let us rearrange the words a little. This is the meaning: in the righteousness of God, the absolute justice and fairness of God, you have obtained an equally precious faith with us. God in His righteousness has, in this consummate gift of faith, made us gloriously equal. Now look at that. Where does the writer begin his reasoning about our primary equality? He begins with the righteousness of God. God is perfectly fair. He is no respecter of persons. This faith is often troubled and disturbed by the material inequalities we see around us. Here is my little one safe at home in bed, and here is another little one, not much older, out upon the streets in the late night, hungry and cold. Is God fair? Here is a good man in chronic pain; here is a bad man in health and wealth and honour. Yet God is righteous in His purpose! He does not treat us like puppets and marionettes. He has endowed us with brain and conscience and heart and will, and He has committed to us the power by which many of these gross injustices can be rectified. If the Church of the living God were to awake from her sleep to-day, much could be done to rearrange material comforts, and to crush and destroy many things which make for misery, disease. and death. While our sword is rusting, and our couch has almost become our tomb, do not let us raise a mere debating society topic and ask the question: Is God fair? It is for our own dignity, and for the disciplining and perfecting of the race, that our God has committed unto us the power by which many of these burdensome iniquities may be removed. But, leaving all these, let it be said that in the great primary things, the things out of which all other equalities take their spring, we may be grandly equal. We may all obtain an equally precious faith, the faith-dynamic which can remove mountains. Faith itself is a gift of God, and in this all men may be equal. We and Paul! The Salvation Army Captain and Martin Luther! 'Precious faith,' our author calls it, precious because of the wealth which through it comes into the life. 'Faith buys wine and milk,' says an old commentator. Faith goes into the country of God, among His vineyards, and out among His fields, and eats and drinks the rare and sweet and toothsome things. In this great primary matter we may all be equal, and in this fundamental equality all other healthy equalities will find their impulse and resource.

3. And lastly, we have here the genius of *fraternity*. 'Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus.' How deep and exquisite is the spirit of fraternity! What do these people seek for one another? Knowledge! 'Knowledge of the Lord.' And this means the advanced stages of a science, the most perfect learning, the riper unfoldings of the glory of God. They are ambitious for one another, that spiritual obscurities may be clarified, and that the partial may be perfected.

¶ A little while ago, at the dawning of the day, I looked out over a great stretch of country from the vantage ground of a lofty summit. I could only see things dimly, in vague and imperfect outline. There beneath me lay stretched out into the far distance a long, white streak of dull silver; and there rested a grey cloud; and yonder loomed a dark botch which seemed to be a remnant of the departing light. But the light came on apace, and my knowledge was advanced and perfected. The thin white streak turned out to be a river! The bank of grey mist revealed itself as a lake! The dark botch, which seemed like the belated baggage of the night, revealed itself as a forest! 'The glory of the Lord shall be revealed.' 'Now I know in part, but then . . . !' 'Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God.' Out of this advanced and advancing knowledge there is to come a multiplication of grace and peace. Grace is to be multiplied; the single drops are to become showers; the solitary rays are to glow like the noon. And peace is to be multiplied, deepened, heightened, and enriched! Is not this the very genius of fraternity? What thing more beautiful can brotherhood grow than wishes and intercessions like these?[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett.

The Glory and the Virtue of God.

2 Pet. i. 3.—'Through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue' (RV).

THE proper way of reading this verse is not 'Him that hath called us to glory and virtue,' but 'Him that called us by his own glory and virtue.' Do you see the difference? In the one case the language expresses the things in imitation of the Divine nature to which God summoned you and me when He called us; but the deeper thought still is the things in that Divine nature and activity itself which constitute His great summons and invitation of men to His Son; and these are the two, whatever they may be, which the writer here describes in that rather peculiar and unusual language for Scripture, 'He called us by his own glory and virtue.'

1. *God's glory.*—Threadbare and consequently vague as the expression is in the minds of a great many people who have heard it ever since they were little children, God's glory has a very definite meaning in Scripture. All starts from the Old Testament use of the expression. There it is the distinct specific name for the supernatural light that lay between the cherubim and brooded over the ark and the mercy-seat. That was specifically and originally the 'glory of God,' the raying out, the irradiation of a material, though supernatural, symbol of His Divine and spiritual presence. But take that material picture—for God teaches us as we do our children, with picture books first, and that Jewish system was God's illuminated alphabet which He put into the hands of His children—take that symbol and lift it up from the more material into the spiritual region, and it is just this: the glory of God in its deepest meaning is the irradiation and perpetual pouring out and out from Himself, as the rays of the sun stream out from its great orb; the pouring out from Himself of the light, and the perfectness, and the beauty of His own self-revelation. And we may fairly translate and paraphrase the first words of the text thus: God's great way of summoning men to Himself is by raying out His love upon them, and letting the fullness of that ineffable and uncreated light, in which is no darkness at all, stream into the else blinded and hopeless lives and hearts of men.

The highest form of the Divine glory is Jesus Christ; not the attributes with which men clothe a somewhat heathen divinity; not those abstractions that you find in books of theology. All that is but the fringe of the glory, and the living white light at the centre and heart of all the radiance is the light of love which is gathered into the gentle Christ. As the Apostle John has taught us, 'we beheld his glory'—yes, and binding together the two words that people so often have pitted against each other—'We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' It is the highest light in Him that says: 'I am the light of the world'—verily, and the very light of very light; the brightness of His glory, the irradiation of His splendour, and the express image of His person.

For what is glory? It is the bloom of character. It is majesty issuing in grace. It is solar glory falling upon infirm eyes in rays of softest shining. It is holiness consummated in tenderness. It is truth in the radiant robes of mercy. It is the splendour of the Godhead shedding itself abroad in the delicacy of love. We must never dissociate grace from majesty; in reality we are unable to do it, but we are sorely tempted in thought to make the division. In literal truth we can no more dissociate them than we can separate the sun from the sunlight. 'We beheld his glory, *full of grace and truth.*' So that when we are contemplating the glory of the Lord we are among the holy tendernesses, the majestic gentlenesses, the incorruptible love which forgives and is never defiled. Glory is the manifested presence of the Lord; warm and gentle as sunshine, and clean and pure as fire. The writer purports to speak as the Apostle Peter and such would be the outstanding characteristics of the Master's life as recalled by the fisherman-seer, the man who once shrank from his Master in the awful consciousness of a

tremendous disparity, but who now longed and prayed for an even closer and more intimate communion.

With all thy heart, with all thy soul and mind,
Thou must Him love and His behests embrace;
All other loves, with which the world doth blind
Weak fancies, and stir up affections base,
Thou must renounce and utterly displace,
And give thyself unto Him full and free,
That full and free did give Himself to thee.

Then shalt thou feel thy spirit so possest,
And ravish'd with devouring great desire
Of His dear Self, that shall thy feeble breast
Inflame with love, and set thee all on fire
With burning zeal, through every part entire,
That in no earthly thing thou shalt delight,
But in His sweet and amiable sight.

Thenceforth all world's desire will in thee die,
And all earth's glory, on which men do gaze,
Seem dirt and dross in thy pure sighted eye,
Compared with that Celestial Beauty's blaze,
Whose glorious beams all fleshly sense doth daze
With admiration of their passing light,
Blinding the eyes and lumining the spright.

Then shall thy ravished soul inspired be,
With heavenly thoughts far above human skill,
And thy bright radiant eyes shall plainly see
Th' Idea of His pure glory present still
Before thy face, that all thy spirits shall fill
With sweet enragement of celestial Love,
Kindled through sight of those fair things above.[1]

2. *God's virtue.*—The other side of the writer's thought seems, if we will only strip it of the threadbare technicalities that we associate with it, to be as great a wonder as God's 'glory'—God's 'virtue.' Virtue here is substantially the same thing that we mean by the word 'energy' or 'power.' When old women in country places talk about the 'virtues' of plants, they do not mean by that the goodness of plants; they mean something about powers which they suppose them to be able to put forth. We read in one of the Gospels that our Lord Himself said at one notable period of His life that 'virtue had gone out of him,' meaning thereby, not goodness, but energy. And so we may get a sufficiently near equivalent to the meaning of the text, if for the second of the two words we read, 'He hath called us by the glory, the raying out of His light,' and 'He hath called us by the activity and energy, the power in action of His great and lustrous Being.'

As Christ is the glory so is He the power—power in its highest, noblest, form—the power of patient gentleness and Divine suffering; power in its widest sweep—'unto every one that believeth'; power in its most wondrous operation—'the power of God unto salvation.' If you want light, look to Christ; if you want to behold with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, go to Him, and let His sunshine smite you on the face as the light smote Stephen, and then will you say, 'He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father.' The highest, noblest, perfect, and final form in which all God's glory, all God's energy, are gathered together to make their appeal to human nature, is when a Galilean peasant stood up in a little knot of forgotten Jews, and said to them, and through them to us, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

Peter had marvelled at the Master's power over Himself. He had stood in silent wonder as he gazed at Jesus' self-possession and self-control. It was all so opposed to his own self-distraction, his self-dissipation and indecision. He had marked his Master's power of patience, His refusal to be hurried into any precipitate action, His quiet waiting for the appointed time: 'Mine hour is not yet come.' He had witnessed the Lord's inexhaustible patience in the presence of His foes. How full of waiting gentleness He was through all those three years! How He bore with Judas, and how eagerly He watched for signs of his return. He knew him, He pleaded with him; even when Judas was intent on betrayal He held him as by a hair. And Peter had seen the Lord's patience with His friends. It takes

[1] Edmund Spenser.

an immense storage of power to be patient with dull people. And the Lord's disciples had been very dull, and had learned the lessons very slowly. 'Do ye not yet understand?' 'Oh, slow of heart to believe!' And yet the lesson had been quietly repeated, and no sign of irritableness was witnessed in the Master's speech and behaviour. He condescended to the level of the dullest-witted disciple, and patiently bore with him as he learned the elements of the gospel of grace. Peter had gazed upon all this—it had been a daily phenomenon—and now when he looked back upon it all, and recalled his impressions of these marvellous years, he was re-impressed with the wealth of the 'Divine power' of his Redeemer.

But Peter had also witnessed the Master's power over others. He had seen His transfiguring influence over their souls. He had seen faces illumined by His touch. He had watched the lighting up of a darkened life. He had seen the rekindling of a Magdalene and the restoration of a Zaccheus. He had seen the cold, paralysing burden of guilt fall away at the imperative of the Lord's command: 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' And when the once paralysed body buoyantly stepped away from the Master's presence, Peter detected behind the released body a quickened and liberated soul. Peter had also seen the transfiguring power of the Lord upon the minds of others. He had seen Him break the tyranny of mental bondage, the sovereignty of vicious thinking, and he had seen the oppressor stand clothed and in his right mind. He had finally witnessed the Lord's power over the bodies of men. He could command the forces of health, and they came at his bidding. He could marshal them as an army and antagonize disease and drive it away. He had seen leprosy pass out of a man's face like a tide retiring from the beach. He had seen the mystic element of life return into a vacant body, and all its functions and faculties restored. Is there any wonder that, when Peter gazed back upon all these things, his soul should bow in holy reverence in the contemplation of the Master's power?

¶ Listen to this testimony from one of a criminal tribe in India. Speaking to the missionary he said:

'Please do not come here for the next two weeks! We like to have you come, but the next two weeks is our special thieving time, and your message of Jesus creates in us a desire to be honest and righteous. If you continue to come, we will not have the courage or the desire to steal.'

Of whom but the Son of the living God could such be said?[1]

Spiritual Life.

2 Pet. i. 3.—'According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue' (RV 'by his own glory and virtue').

Broadly speaking, the Gospels stand for history, while the Epistles witness to experience. This distinction must not be pushed too far. The Holy Spirit, in guiding the writers of the Synoptic Gospels in their selection of incidents, must in part have worked through affinities born of their own particular experience; and the Fourth Gospel was largely lived out in the experience of the Church before the inspired pen of its writer set down its immortal sentences. But, speaking generally, the Gospels set forth sacred facts concerning Jesus; and the Epistles tell us, directly or indirectly, what those facts meant in the experience of the early Christians. The Gospels set forth what Jesus had lived out; the Epistles help us to realize how what Jesus had lived out reappeared in the lives of His earlier followers.

These considerations apply particularly to this Epistle, and to our especial text. The Epistle comes to us from the latter half of the second century; and our text has been rightly described as summarizing the experience of at least one generation of believers. The Christian slave, hurrying along the Via Appia, and thinking, as he saw its paved road threading the Campagna, of Him who said, 'I am the way'; the Egyptian boatman rowing on the Nile, what time his heart leaped to the

[1] Ida Q. Moulton.

vision of the river that maketh glad the city of God; the woman who bent over Sychar's well, pensive with the thought of Him who had promised the living water; and the carpenter of Corinth, whose craft took on a larger dignity because of his communion with that Blessed One who earlier still had worked at the bench—all these would have given the same testimony. The glory and virtue of Jesus Christ had challenged the quality of their existence, and had called them to life; and when they responded, lo! the spiritual life became self-conscious within them, and was sustained by the power of Jesus granted to those He loved. As they beheld His own glory and virtue, they recognized in Him what they knew in their secret souls they themselves ought to be. The vision of the Christ persuaded them from existence to life, and from life to life indeed. The glory and virtue of the patience of Jesus made them long to be patient as He was patient. The glory and virtue of the courage of Jesus made them long to be brave as He was brave. The glory and virtue of the persistent tenderness of Jesus made them long to be tender as He was tender. His prayerfulness made them long to pray, His dignity made them desire to be dignified, His consistent self-sacrifice made them yearn to suppress self. To their amazement they found that these very desires were just so many manifestations of a new type of life created within them by their contact with Jesus Christ, and to their gratitude they discovered that His power communicated to them all that was necessary to sustain and develop that life.

1. Now the religious life depends upon the extent to which men share the life of God; and for this all men have some capacity. It may not be a very marked capacity, and it may scarcely be developed, but it is there. 'A man may live for many years thinking he lacks that capacity; but one day something moves him to a consciousness of God, and if he develops that consciousness it becomes communion. The fact is, that we are all spiritual, whether we know it or not. Love for little children is just the Divine in us turning to what in this world is most like itself. Our perception of beauty is just God recognizing Himself in the world and using human faculties in the act of recognition. Those crude mysticisms, those vague eternities, those nameless emotions that somehow stir somewhere within us are just the spiritual life essaying self-assertion. God is in us even as we are in God; and we begin to live, as distinct from merely existing, when our religious life becomes self-conscious, when somehow we know ourselves to be spiritual.

¶ Our natural Will is to have God, and the Good Will of God is to have us; and we may never cease from willing nor from longing till we have Him in fulness of joy: and then we may no more desire.[1]

2. Yet even in spiritual life there are distinctions. Let history speak. All through the ages men have been seeking God; and the quality of their spiritual life has varied with their success. The Fijian worshipping base gods with an idolatry past all belief; the Buddhist turning an atrophied heart towards a spiritualized Nothingness; the Zoroastrian offering eager worship to the flaming sun; the Jew yielding himself to Jehovah—all these in varied and ascending degrees through the long ages have consciously or unconsciously been seeking God; and the search has always been a testimony to the amazing vitality of spiritual life, a vitality so wonderful that no religion, however base, can kill it. One of the main differences between the Jew and devotees of lesser religions is that the Jew was the only man who knew that God was seeking him. He knew this, even though he was afraid of getting too near God. What neither he nor anyone else in the world fully realized was that God, by His Spirit, by the very Force that moved them towards Him, was in reality always seeking all men. Yet so it was! 'In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. . . . That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world!'

[1] Julian, the Anchoress.

3. Through all the years the characteristic separating humanity from the lower creation has been a persistent religiousness. In pre-Christian times this religiousness was at a minimum in the idolatries of savage peoples, at a maximum in the monotheism and spiritual experience of the Jews. But with the advent of Jesus the religious life became deeper, more spiritual, more significant, richer and nobler. The universal religiousness was particularized to perfection in Christianity. Men saw in Jesus what they ought to be. The vision called them to a better life; this Divine power granted unto them all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that called them by His own glory and virtue.

You are alive spiritually. But are you alive with the abounding spirituality of Jesus Christ? You are an example of the persistent religiousness of the race. Is your religion of the specialized type revealed by Jesus Christ? If you were not alive spiritually, it would be no use appealing to you. For life is from life, and not from death. And the new birth, like every other birth, is from life to a larger life ministered to by a wider environment. You are spiritual. Are you Christian?

To return to the imagery of our text, in Jesus Christ we see not only God but our own lives as God wishes them to be. And we know this last full well. When we hear Jesus say to the woman with the stained life: 'Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more,' we know we ought to be as charitable and merciful as our Lord. When His righteous anger moves Him to denounce some Pharisee, we know that our holy wrath ought also to consume the hypocrisy and pretentiousness of the world. When He weeps at the grave of Lazarus, we know our own hearts ought to be tender with sympathy for the grief-stricken folk around us: and when, beholding Jerusalem, He weeps over the sins of the city, we know our own sorrow for the transgressions of humanity ought to add us to the sacred company of those who have lived and died to save a heedless world. Oh yes, His own glory and virtue call us from religiousness to Christianity; and as certainly as we respond His Divine power grants unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through our knowledge of Him. Spiritual life is fellowship with God. A Christian life is communion with God through and in Jesus Christ.

¶ I have lately felt a most curious sensation, urging me to write down an experience I had when quite a young man, while I was acting as tutor at Bexhill. I had been in a very despondent state of mind for several days, mentally and spiritually depressed. I had lost the sense of paternity, earthly and spiritual. I seemed to be alone in the darkness, groping my way. . . . I awoke during that night filled with the most marvellous happiness, in such a state of exultation that I felt as though a barrier had fallen, as though a door had suddenly been opened, and a flood of golden light poured in upon me, transfiguring me completely. I have never felt anything in the least like it.

I hid my face under the bed-clothes and gripped them hard to prevent myself from shouting out loud for joy. I was filled with the sense of God's infinite love for all creatures and for myself; and not only that, but I felt so full of it myself I could have done anything —embraced a beggar—as an expression of my feeling. The joy, the happiness, cannot be described. People talk of the happiness of heaven; if such happiness as I felt can continue for ever, it would indeed be bliss. I *was* in heaven. I felt so full of love to everybody that the words of the Sermon upon the Mount, 'Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you,' not only seemed *possible*, but they seemed the natural outcome of my state of mind. I could not help doing such things. I have never experienced anything in the least like it; but the words of St. Paul were actually true, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' I was possessed by the personality of Christ. At the time I did not think of it as Christ, but as God the Father; but now I see that He manifested Himself through Christ. Showing that if we are possessed by the spirit of Christ, which is love, we cannot help feeling as St. Paul did when he spoke those words.[1]

[1] *Bishop Moorhouse*, 15.

I stand upon the mount of God,
With sunlight in my soul;
I hear the storms in vales beneath,
I hear the thunders roll;

But I am calm with Thee, my God,
Beneath these glorious skies;
And to the height of Thine abode
Nor storms nor clouds can rise.

O this is life, and peace, and joy,
My God, to find Thee so—
Thy face to see, Thy voice to hear,
And all Thy love to know.[1]

The Divine Nature.

2 Pet. i. 4.—'Partakers of the divine nature.'

What is the Divine nature?

1. In the New Testament God is described in three ways—God is Spirit, God is Light, God is Love. There you have the grandest effort known to men to express in words the nature of God. Higher than that man's thoughts will never reach, for it is the truth as it is in the face of Christ. The riches of that great vision man will continue to explore, and so doing will find increasing treasure, but its wealth he will never be able to exhaust.

(1) Take the first—God is *Spirit*. That is the lesson which Jesus gave to a poor degraded Samaritan woman, as He sat by Jacob's Well; and that He did it is a fact ever to be remembered by all, and especially by those who foolishly contend that the Christian Church should not take a spiritual and ethical religion like Christianity, so admirably adapted to the progressive nations, to the lowest races of mankind. That Christ gave the highest, the grandest, conception of God and worship to a poor woman considered by the Jew, and doubtless by some of her own people to be an outcast is surely a sublime inspiration to all missionary workers. The best for the neediest—that is at once the law and example of Christ; and His Church can never go far wrong in following His chivalrous example and generous law. 'God is spirit,' He said, 'and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' But what is the nature of spirit? What is its dominating instinct, its irresistible impulse? The instinct of spirit is to reveal itself, to proclaim and to communicate itself. Spirit is ever striving to utter itself. How true it is of the spirit of man! What are all his strivings and his great achievements—his art and literature and music, his inventions and industries, his trade and commerce, but unceasing efforts to utter himself? And how abundantly true it is of God! What is the Creation itself but an utterance of God? What is the Incarnation but a revelation of the Eternal Spirit? What is redemption but the proclamation of the nature of God in a world of sin? The Divine nature is ever striving to utter, and to communicate itself to others. That is its instinct, and Christians are partakers of that nature.

(2) Or think of the second great statement—God is *Light*. The very nature of light is to diffuse itself. It is penetrating, permeating, pervasive. It rests not till it has communicated itself and overthrown darkness. Darken at noon-day a room, shut every opening and close up every chink, and leave but a keyhole unstopped, and the light will at once thrust through its long lances in its eagerness to stab darkness to the heart, and to overthrow its reign. That is the very nature of light; and it is the nature of God. He is ever seeking to communicate Himself; and in Christ Jesus men are called to be partakers in that nature.

(3) Or think of the third statement—God is *Love*. Again the very nature, the instinct and impulse of love is to give itself. That is true of all love, and every lover's heart knows it. It is plain in the revelation of love that we have in the face of Jesus Christ whom God gave, and who gave Himself, to be the Saviour of men. Further, it is the Divine nature to give itself to those who need it most. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners; not the self-sufficient, but the needy. And—

There is no pause to loving,
None in the realm of God.
For His heart is white with an infinite light,
And His hope is boundless broad.

[1] G. B. Bubier.

Love has a hem of its garment
That touches the very dust,
It can reach the stains of the streets and lanes,
And because it can, it must.
It dares not rest on the mountain,
It is bound to come to the vale,
And it cannot find its fulness of mind
Till it falls on the lives that fail.

That is the very nature and inevitable action of love. Every mother's heart is proof of it, and the revelation of Jesus Christ, who came to seek and save that which was lost, has made it unmistakably clear. The Divine nature, which is love, is always seeking to communicate itself, and Christians are partakers of the Divine nature by appropriating the exceeding great and precious promises of God in Christ.

2. Now look at the argument again, and then sum it up. God is Spirit, ever uttering Himself; God is Light, ever communicating Himself; God is Love, ever giving Himself; and Christians are partakers of that nature. That surely implies that they must share in all the instincts, impulses, and hungers of the Divine life—to utter, to communicate, to give itself freely, and all its wealth. But what is all that but to say that to be a Christian is to be a missionary, and not to be missionary is not to be Christian. Not to be missionary is not to share in the Divine nature. There can be no escape from the grip of that truth. A Christian is a partaker of the passion of Christ's heart, who came to call sinners, to seek and save that which was lost; to give light to those who sit in darkness, and life to such as are in the shadow of death.

It can therefore never be higher and grander conceptions of God, and of God's great ways with men, that weaken missionary motive and chill missionary zeal. It is impossible that such should ever be the outcome of partaking of the Divine nature. It is worldliness and selfishness and spiritual death in the Church that do such deadly work. It is not, and can never be, an enlarged Christianity that makes men self-centred and forgetful of their brethren who are in the night. It is lack of Christianity, it is because they are not sharers in the Divine life and its hungers and impulses. And the cure for their trouble is not more ecclesiastical or missionary organization, but a deeper spiritual life; not more scolding about money, but a greater share in the love of God who sent His Son freely to give the Divine life to men.

¶ In these records [the Old and New Testaments] God is revealed to us as continuously invading the human race in a spirit of inexhaustible love. He is met with indifference, reluctance and fierce antagonism. As He comes He suffers pain and is continually delivered unto death. But He never ceases to move down upon the heart of men. He does not come independently. He does not break upon men like a sudden storm from heaven. He comes *to men through men*. He comes to men who know Him not through those men who have received Him. Those who receive Him He strangely identifies with Himself. To as many as receive Him to them gives He power to become the sons of God. As He loves they love. As He moves down towards those that know Him not, so they move down to others. As He meets with indifference and reluctance so do they. As He suffers they suffer. As He reigns they reign. . . .

The choice is laid before you whether you will range yourself on the side of this suffering, conquering love, or against it; whether you will be in the midstream of Divine Purpose, or in a backwater; whether you will turn all your powers inward to the ministry of self, or dispose them outwards to the ministry of others.

The least gifted of us are endowed with faculties of body, mind and soul which can only be called marvellous. The strongest of us have but a brief time in which to exercise them. If we place them at the Divine disposal, to accomplish the Divine Purpose for which they were given, we are of all men most blessed. If we hold them for ourselves to accomplish our own purposes, for which they never were intended, we are of all men most miserable.[1]

[1] C. McEvoy. *The Great Embassy*, 89.

Partakers.

2 Pet. i. 4.—'Partakers of the divine nature.'

'Partakers of the divine nature'—that is what being a Christian means, according to the New Testament—*sharing in the very life of Christ.* We are not to understand the Christian life to mean external imitation of Christ, taking Christ as a kind of copy-book pattern, but rather having Christ Himself living again in us. We sing, 'Thy *nature,* gracious Lord, impart': that is what being a Christian really means. It means partaking of Christ's *nature.* It means, not having Christ outside of us as a model, but having Christ within us as a power. The *imitatio Christi* may be nothing better than a more exacting and burdensome legalism. We are in the region of the gospel—of the glad, genial, gracious gospel—only when we share the very nature of Christ, when we partake of His very life. That is how the Christian life is represented consistently in the New Testament—it is a participation, a fellowship, a vital communion. That is how Christ Himself taught us to think of it. 'Abide in me,' He said to His disciples, 'and I in you.' 'Apart from me ye can do nothing.' The Christian life is not possible to man unaided and alone. It is possible only to man *plus Christ,* or rather to man possessed and informed by Christ, to man *inhabited* by Christ. And that is exactly what the Christian life was in the actual experience of the saints.

Take that mightiest of all the saints—the Apostle Paul. How does he explain the life he lived? 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' He was conscious of a participation, a fellowship, a vital communion. It was as if the natural and original principle of life within him had been changed for a nobler and a greater. Nor was this conception of the Christian life confined to the Apostle Paul. Paul had at Antioch to withstand Peter to the face because he allowed himself to be led astray. But, whatever sharp differences the two Apostles may have had as to the place and function of the Mosaic Law, Peter agreed absolutely with his 'beloved brother Paul' in declaring that the Christian life was a fellowship, a participation, a vital communion. That is what being a Christian meant from first to last, from beginning to end, according to Peter—sharing Christ's lot and life.

Three phrases are found in 1 and 2 Peter with this word, 'partaker' in them—2 Pet. i. 4, 'Partakers of the divine nature'; 1 Pet. iv. 13, 'Partakers of Christ's sufferings'; and 1 Pet. v. 1, 'Partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.' If we take these three phrases together, they will serve very well as St. Peter's picture of the complete Christian. What is a Christian? A Christian is a man who has a *nature* in common with Christ. He is a man who has *sufferings* in common with Christ. He is a man who at the last will share an infinite *glory* in common with Christ.

1. First, then, here is the Christian life in its origin, at its source, at its very fountain-head—man becomes a partaker of the Divine *nature.* The human gets transfigured into the Divine. Our *bias* is towards evil. If we follow the broad and easy road of our own instincts and appetites, we end in destruction; it is only by agonizing to enter through the strait gate and by climbing a steep and narrow way that we end in life. That is the Bible representation of the facts about human nature, and everyone carries the verification of that representation in his own breast. We know that the instincts and passions of human nature would sweep us into sin and shame; it is only by crucifying the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof, that we keep straight at all. And that is why the Bible insists, as the first step in the Christian life, that we must become 'partakers of the divine nature.' There is no chance for us so long as the old nature is dominant. We must be 'born again,' as Jesus said. We must be 'renewed in the very spirit of our minds,' as the Apostle Paul puts it. We must 'put off the old man,' we must 'put on the new man.' Every phrase used in the New Testament to set forth conversion, to describe the first step of the Christian life, indicates a change which is radical,

revolutionary, profound. We are changed at the very core and centre of our being. We get a new principle of life. We get a new heart, as the Psalmist expresses it. 'We renew our strength,' or rather 'we *exchange* our strength,' as Isaiah puts it.

Leave human nature to itself, and what will it live for? Self. Self is the dominating principle. But when a man becomes a 'partaker of the divine nature,' what does he live for? Love. 'God is love.' That is what God is essentially and in His inmost being; and when a man becomes a 'partaker of the divine nature,' that is what it means—love and not self becomes the animating principle of his life. That is conversion, redemption, salvation. And God is equal to this mighty miracle of changing a man at the very core and centre of his being.

¶ The first story in Begbie's *Broken Earthenware* is that of the Puncher, as he was familiarly known. He was a prize-fighter, the terror of his neighbourhood; he was a thief; he was a drunkard; he terrorized men into giving him drink. If ever a man was earthly, sensual, devilish, the Puncher was the man. But the grace of God laid hold of him and transformed him. And the man whose one passion at the beginning of the story was the passion for drink, at the end of it had still one passion, the passion for souls. That is Christianity in its beginning and at its source—when we are born again, when we live not in the flesh, but by the Spirit.[1]

2. In the second place, here is the Christian life in its course—a man becomes a partaker of Christ's *sufferings*. The Divine nature is at its very core and essence—love. Now, love is in its very nature sacrificial. It involves the ideas of suffering and sacrifice. Love means nothing if it does not mean self-impartation, self-surrender, self-abnegation. Love is the ruling principle of the Divine life. And how did that love show itself? It showed itself in sacrifice and suffering. 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' God saw men estranged from Him by their sin, and to make a way for them, He Himself 'filled up the gap.' He filled up the gap with the sufferings and death of His own Son, whose sufferings and sacrifice were, after all, God's sufferings and sacrifice. He suffered and died in order to fill up the gap and make it possible for men to be reconciled once again to Him. You remember how St. Paul in a familiar phrase links together the two ideas of love and sacrifice. 'The Son of God,' he cries, 'loved me, and gave himself for me.' All the suffering and sacrifice of the Incarnation and the Cross were implicit in the love. Because He loved, He gave Himself. Because He loved, He bore the Cross. Because He loved, He filled up the gap by the sacrifice of Himself. Holy love, like that of Christ, is, in a sinful world, bound to be suffering love. Redeeming love is bound to be a sacrificial love. And so it comes about that the man who starts by becoming a partaker of the Divine nature finds that the Christian life for him means that he becomes a partaker of the sufferings of Christ.

(1) Let us assume that a man is a genuine partaker of the Divine nature, that he really shares in the Spirit of Christ—what will follow? This will follow, to begin with: he will take the sin and wickedness of the world on to his own heart. He will feel the shame and burden of it. It is impossible for a man to walk heedless and unconcerned amid the misery and evil of this world if he really has the Spirit of Christ.

I see the folk thereunder.
Bound who should conquer, slaves who
should be kings,—
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented in a show of things;—

Then with a rush the intolerable craving
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-
call,—
Oh to save these! to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all![1]

(2) This second thing will follow upon a genuine participation in the Divine nature:

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Hope of the Gospel*, 279.

[1] F. W. H. Myers, *Saint Paul*.

like Christ, the Christian will want to 'stand in the gap.' He will want to share in his Lord's redeeming and saving work. Look at St. Paul. He had no sooner become a new creature in Christ than he wanted to be by his Lord's side in the gap. Straightway in the synagogue he proclaimed Jesus that He was the Christ. As soon as St. Paul received the Divine gift of love, he was ready to share Christ's toil and suffering for the sake of others. You remember how in that great passage of the Epistle to the Philippians he links the two things together: 'That I may know him,' he says, 'and the fellowship of his sufferings.' And so you see St. Paul spending himself in his missionary labours, and suffering untold things in the process—stoned at Lystra, scourged at Philippi, fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus, shipwrecked at Malta, put to death in Rome. And looking back on all he had endured and suffered in his Christian service, he declared in a great and solemn word that he had been 'filling up on his part that which was lacking of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake, which is the Church.'

¶ Harold Begbie's *Broken Earthenware* has passed now into the category of familiar and popular books. You will remember it tells the story of the work of a Salvation Army Corps in one of the wickedest and meanest of London's mean streets. The little band was led by a fair, refined girl-adjutant, whose goodness was so obvious and so radiant that even the vile dwellers in that vile street spoke of her as an angel. Day after day she marched at the head of the little band through this wretched quarter. Night after night she held meetings amongst the thieves and criminals and prostitutes and outcasts who made that awful street their home. She spent her life in that wretched street and amongst those dreadful people. What for? To lift those creatures who had almost ceased to be men and women back to that pure and happy and blessed life which she herself enjoyed. She shared their lot in order that they might share hers. She would have felt she had shared in the life of that vile street in vain if she had not been able to help some of its wretched inhabitants to sit down in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus. But she felt that the desire of her heart was given her when she saw the Puncher and the Tight Handful, and that ghastly creature who was known as Old Born Drunk, entering into possession of her secret, sharing with her the life which was life indeed.[1]

3. And here is the end of the Divine life—a man becomes a 'partaker of the *glory* that shall be revealed.' As for Jesus, so for the disciple—the cross is the way to the crown. And that is how the Christian life ends—we share in the glory. There is probably not one of us who does not want to share in the glory. But what about sharing in the sufferings? There is only one way to the glory that shall be revealed, and that is first of all to become partakers of the Divine nature, and then to become partakers of the sufferings of Christ. Those of us who profess to be Christ's people: are we with Him in the gap? Have we got the passion for souls? Are we ready to lay down our lives for the brethren? Are we bearing the cross? It is stark and cruel and ugly, but it ends in the crown.

O Cross, that liftest up my head,
  I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red,
  Life that shall endless be.

Faith and Diligence.

2 Pet. i. 5.—'Giving all diligence, add to your faith.'

Here are two aspects of the Christian life; contrasted, not discordant; two sides of one shield. Take first the aspect of rest, of faith, of the peace of an absolute simple reliance. Take then the aspect of diligence, of pains, of watching and prayer, of the faithful use of appointed means.

1. 'Your faith.' This is the central secret of the Christian. It is the distinctive and

[1] J. D. Jones, *The Hope of the Gospel*, 272.

characteristic thing in the gospel. 'I believe,' not 'I will do,' is the watchword the gospel gives us. 'I rely, I confide, I trust, I entrust': this is the very life of our religion, the water from the fountain-head of the truth of Christ.

'By faith, and faith only, we are justified.' This was the grand confession of the Reformation. It is to the full as true to-day. It means that we sinners, knowing something of the awfulness of sin and guilt, go for 'peace with God' to the Lamb that was slain, to Jesus Christ, who died and rose again, and is now our Advocate with the Father, being the Propitiation for our sins. It means that we go to Him 'just as we are, and waiting not to rid the soul from one dark blot,' as if we could so make ourselves worthier of Him. We came with empty hands to receive the gift of God. It is a profound while salutary humiliation. It 'pours contempt on all our pride.' But how great a rest it is! It is Christ Himself for us.

This fact of the spiritual life may be, of course, like every other, mis-stated and misapplied. It may be put so that it seems to mean an absolute 'quietism,' in which the soul merely sits still and lets things be. It may be applied so as to seem to suggest a result in which the disciple shall come to claim an unsinning 'perfection', getting beyond humiliation and the confession of sin. But the thing in itself standeth sure. The one true victory over inward sin is a trusted Christ. Are you a tempted man, defeated a thousand times after all your efforts, then make this sacred experiment for yet one crisis more. Call in the Lord, the Stronger than the strong. Give yourself over to Him. He will hold you, and tread down the enemy. So you, upheld by Christ, shall in Christ tread him down, resting yet victorious.

¶ A man got up in a meeting to speak. It was down in Rhode Island, out a bit from Providence. He was a farmer, an old man. He had become a Christian late in life, and this evening was telling about his start. He had been a rough, bad man. He said that when he became a Christian even the cat knew that some change had taken place. That caught my ear. It had a genuine ring. It seemed prophetic of the better day coming for all the lower animal creation. So I listened.

He said that the next morning after the change of purpose he was going down to the village a little distance from his farm. He swung along the road, happy in heart, singing softly to himself, and thinking about the Saviour. All at once he could feel the fumes coming out of a saloon ahead. He couldn't see the place yet, but his keen, trained nose felt it. The odours came out strong, and gripped him. He said he was frightened, and wondered how he would get by. He had never gone by before, he said; always gone in; but he couldn't go in now. But what to do, that was the rub. Then he smiled, and said, 'I remembered, and I said, "Jesus, you'll have to come along and help me get by, I never can by myself."' And then in his simple, illiterate way he said, '*and He come*—and *we* went by, and we've been going by ever since.'[1]

2. 'Giving all diligence.' Behold the other side of the shield. The rest of faith is anything but a way to contrive for us a safe 'slackness' in the Christian course. Rather, the promise of it is the greatest possible stimulus to diligence. For it is an assurance that real diligence, applied at the right point, is immensely worth while.

What is the highest and at the same time the simplest purpose of the means of grace —secret prayer, self-scrutiny before God, the Holy Scriptures, the sacred Supper of the Lord, the Christian Sabbath, public worship, family devotion. Mainly a twofold purpose, two aims converging into one; a growing knowledge of our need, and a deepening and ever-developing sight of our Lord Jesus Christ as 'all our salvation and all our desire,' so that we both love His will and rely upon His power. If we neglect 'all diligence' in the spiritual life, then, let us be sure of it, we shall decline in the deep desire to be conformed to His image and to follow in His steps Further, we shall decline in the conscious activity and persistence of faith which rests in Him for peace and for power.

[1] S. D. Gordon, *Quiet talks on Service*, 80.

To many minds now, as in the days when this Epistle was written, the idea of faith excludes the idea of effort; that is to say, faith and works are presumed to involve mutual contradictions. Instead, however, of their being antithetic, they are correlative; and like the wings of a bird, or the twin screws of a vessel, they must act in concert in order to bring about any forward movement of life. The writer places faith at the head of these virtues, because it is the genetic quality that gathers them all up in embryo, making them all possible by relating the soul to the source and fount of all moral excellence. That which faith thus makes possible, diligence must make actual.

¶ That 'unclean' spirit of the parable, who brought back with him seven others more wicked than himself, only did so because he found the chamber 'swept and garnished' and its owner sitting with folded hands. Had he found it all alive with the 'busy hum' of active *work*, there would have been scant welcome for him and his seven.[1]

Christian Character.

2 Pet. i. 5-7.—'Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.'

On what principles are we to lay out and arrange the several clauses of this remarkable sentence, so as to understand their meaning separately, and to perceive their connection? Are we to compare this description of Christian character to a ladder with seven steps, a ladder firmly planted on the ground of faith and rising step by step—first 'virtue' then 'knowledge' then 'temperance' then 'patience' then 'godliness' then 'brotherly kindness,' till at length we reach the high level of 'charity'? Or, when we read this passage, are we rather to be reminded of a rope or cable, where the seven strands—'virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, charity'—are united with 'faith,' intertwined with it, and intertwined with one another, and mutually strengthening one another, so as to form one firm whole?

These are both homely images; but the latter is the more suitable of the two, and more in harmony with the words as they are given to us in the original Greek. Christian character does not grow by successive steps, taken abruptly one after another, so that one is complete before the next is begun, but is formed on the principle of a variety of graces and habits which are in close intercommunion with one another, advancing together to maturity, and reinforcing one another.

It would be true—though of course every metaphor breaks down somewhere—to say that the reciprocal connections of these graces are like those between the parts of a living tree. The twig sprouts from the branch, the branch runs down into the trunk, and the trunk stands broad-based upon the roots. In the same way, these verses give us the family tree of the Christian graces. Very likely the writer had no thought of the time-order in which they appear; time has comparatively little to do with such matters. He sets them before us rather in the order of their natural relationship. Each acts upon all, and all commence simultaneously. Brotherly-kindness is near the foot of the list, and temperance is near the top; yet they were born the same hour.

1. Notice, first, that the word in the text which has been translated in our version 'add' is a very pictorial term, and refers to a choir of well-trained musicians, such as Heman or Asaph led in the days of David and Solomon. The idea which it implies is, that as the singers and the musicians each performed his special part in the Jewish service, and all combined in one perfect unison of sound, so the growth of the Christian character should be accomplished by the harmonious development of each moral quality, and the Christian life, composed of so many different elements, should be one continuous hymn of praise to Him who is our song and our salvation.

The musical illustration of Christian growth in the text is a very profound and far-reaching one. Music is not addressed to the ear

[1] Lewis Carroll.

only, or expressed exclusively by audible sounds. It belongs to the eye as well as to the ear. It may be felt when no sound is heard. Keats says that 'heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter,' implying that there is a music which appeals to the soul, finer than anything that can be expressed by human voice or musical instrument. Beethoven was deaf, heard no outward sounds, but the soul of music was in him, and therefore with the deeper inner ear he heard continuously the Divine music to which all things are attuned. Music is the great principle of order. It enters into the essence of all things. The music of the spheres is not a mere poetic but a scientific phrase. To the ear of the thoughtful everything speaks of the wonderful rhythm of the universe. Light, eldest born of things, comes to us in musical vibrations, and its spectrum is as harmonious as the diatonic scale. The scent of flowers forms chords and octaves of fragrance that produce a most delightful impression upon the nerves of smell. The streams are musical, as they keep up by their perpetual circulation the life of the world. Even the rocks are musical, like Memnon's statue, when some electrical power touches their particles and arranges them by some strange polarity into symmetrical crystals. And to this cadence of the whirling earth our own human hearts involuntarily beat time; and this wonderful rhythm of nature is within our own frames. With this universal harmony the writer wishes the growth of the Christian character to correspond. What Nature does unconsciously and will-lessly, we are to do consciously and willingly. We are to keep step and time to the music of the universe, and to add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, and charity; and thus practically make the statutes of the Lord our song in the house of our pilgrimage.

2. Next, notice that the Christian graces mentioned in this passage are more closely linked together in the writer's thought than might appear from the familiar Authorized Version. The Revised Version, 'In your faith supply virtue,' indicates the connection more clearly, and shows each grace in turn conditioned in its exercise and expression by another. It is 'in' each that each succeeding one is to be exhibited and cultivated, not as a mere addition or ornament to what precedes, but as a vital element, in its fullness of being. No single grace is regarded as complete by itself. Faith is poor and unworthy without valour or 'virtue'; faith should be manly and chivalrous. Valour is not safe without knowledge; zeal should be governed by understanding. Knowledge is pernicious unless it leads to humility and self-repression; knowledge should never make a man proud or overbearing. Self-restraint is superficial if it do not mean patient endurance of wrong as well as control of passion or quelling of pride. Patient endurance is defective unless associated with the fear and love of God: Christian patience is not mere stoical fortitude, but submissiveness born of confidence in God's overrule. Godliness is unworthy the name unless our piety be accompanied by brotherly-kindness; tenderness to man must always be conjoined with devotion to God; heavenliness of mind must not mean forgetfulness of earth. Finally, brotherly-kindness is nothing without love to those outside the circle of brotherhood; love of the brotherhood must pass into the larger love of humanity, that catholic large-heartedness to which man, as man, wherever found, is dear, and no one, however lowly, ignorant, or debased, is common or unclean. This series of graces is thus a unity; they are one, not as a mere chain of distinct and separable links, but as the stones in the arch of the bridge are one, mutually supporting and supported, and all bound together by the keystone.

¶ We hear sometimes of 'The Connexion of the Sciences'; and it is wonderful how a discovery in one science assists the development of another. The astronomer, geologist, and chemist seem to work far apart; yet, after all, the universe is one, and the perfecting of any single science assists other branches of knowledge with which at first it seems to have little or no connexion. So with the virtues of the Christian character; they may seem to

have little in common, to be utterly unrelated; nay, superficially regarded, they appear mutually exclusive and antagonistic—meekness seeming alien to firmness, zeal unsympathetic with patience, modesty assorting ill with self-reliance, economy seeming to exclude generosity, love and tenderness shrinking from conscientiousness and integrity. But really a deep intimacy, a subtle connexion, an indissoluble relationship exists between the virtues, and we cannot strengthen one without reinforcing all. One beautiful thing in character or conduct leads to other beautiful things, to all beautiful things. Sometimes a dull and ugly town is moved to erect a fine municipal hall, and henceforth the whole place begins to improve. As the old structures come down, new ones are built to correspond with the central architecture, one after another the streets are widened, until in the end the town is rebuilt on a nobler scale. With silent eloquence the municipal palace argues the whole environment into something of its own elevation and grandeur.

Or, to vary the illustration, a new and beautiful article is introduced into our home; then it is felt that new carpets, curtains, and furniture, are required to agree with the thing of beauty; then the other rooms look shabby and must be brought into correspondence with the new standard, until in the end the whole dwelling is renewed and transformed. It is much like this with character. When we attain a triumph over ourselves in one particular, when we succeed in more fully acquiring some special excellency of spirit and life, we do more than we think, we raise the tone of our whole character and work. 'Tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience hope.' One golden link draws another. We all understand the connexion of the vices, how one sin facilitates another sin, one sin provokes a worse sin, one sin threatens all sins; and we may remember to our great encouragement that the connexion of the virtues is just as real—that one grace solicits another grace, one grace heralds a higher grace, one grace implies all graces. They form a sweet sisterhood; and where one fair shape is welcomed, the virgins, her companions, follow after.' [1]

Faith.

2 Pet. i. 5.—'Add to your faith.'

Let us look back to find whence we have come, and around to find where we are in our text. As we look back we find that we have come a long way. If we link ourselves with those to whom this Epistle was written we shall find that we are with those who have obtained a precious faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. To us, with them, grace and peace have been multiplied through the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus. His Divine power has granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Him that called us by His own glory and virtue. Exceeding great and precious promises have been granted, and through these we have been made partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Looking back, we see we have come a long way; looking round, we are in the midst of a great and glorious inheritance. May we not rest and enjoy it? Is there anything pertaining to the Christian life that is not included in what has been set forth in the verses preceding our text? Without entering into that great question, let us ponder the truth of our text. Let us say at the outset that, however great may be our privilege and high our attainment, it is not the way of Scripture to permit anyone to think that he has already attained or is already perfect. Every attainment won, every new gift received, is but the occasion of a new departure. This is true now and here, it will be true throughout eternity. Besides this, says the writer, in addition to all that you have attained and received, give all diligence, unfold your faith. There is no finality in the growth of Christian character, no end to the unfolding of faith.

1. Faith is represented here and elsewhere

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *Studies in Christian Character, Work, and Experience*, ii. 76.

as the root, from which spring the stalk, flower, and fruit of Christian character and conduct. There is a very deep and true philosophy in this making of faith the basis of religious life. Because in every other department, no matter where we turn our eyes, we find we cannot take a single step forward without faith. It is the foundation of every super-structure in the mental realm.

(1) Science must begin by making certain assumptions, by inviting us to believe certain axioms or principles, which must be taken on trust. In the study of mathematics, in geometry or algebra or trigonometry, we start by laying down certain propositions as self-evident. We cannot move an inch in our inquiries and conclusions until these are admitted. No man can prove that one and one make two, or that two things are equal to one another; but we accept these axioms as true. The whole of modern astronomy rests on the theory of gravitation. Gravitation is assumed to exist, though no one can explain how it acts. The newer astronomy, in order to account for gravitation and distribution of light and heat, imagines a universal ether, which is millions of times less dense than air. This ether may or may not exist, it is a pure hypothesis—in other words, an article of faith. It is true not only of mathematics and astronomy, but also of the entire aggregate of knowledge, that, in the last analysis, all knowledge rests on faith, faith in the trustworthiness of our senses, faith in the accuracy of our observation, and faith in the correctness of our reasoning. As Dr. Müller says, 'All philosophy hinges upon a postulate; we know that two multiplied by two make four, but no one can tell us why.'

(2) When we pass from the scientific world to the realm of social intercourse, we find the same law obtaining; faith is the primary essential. No friendship can begin or be maintained without faith. We might be compelled to admire another's genius; but if we could not rely on his integrity and sympathy we could not admit him to the circle of our intimates. If we had reason to suspect him of duplicity, nothing would induce us to make him our confidant. Friendship could not live in an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion. Whatever else may be lacking, this—faith and trust—cannot be withheld if men are to be sharers of one another's joys and sorrows.

2. The faith that is spoken of here is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The trustful apprehension of God's unspeakable gift, of the mercy which rose over the world like a bright dawn when the Redeemer came—that is what the writer intends by the word. This is worth mentioning; for it is not uncommon to speak of faith abstractly, as no more than a hopeful, positive, serious way of regarding life. But when the New Testament writers say 'faith,' they mean, quite definitely, faith in contact with its proper object, Christ, and becoming only through that contact a strong triumphant thing. Now and then religion is talked of as though it were but the reaching out of an empty hand gropingly and tentatively into vacancy, like some timid insect waving helpless feelers in the air. That is not our situation. True there was a time, a time of long grief and pain, consumed in experiment and exploration; but it was closed at last; closed, too, not half so much by man's finding God as by God's finding and redeeming man. In Jesus the Father has come among us, near enough to be touched, near enough to be grasped; and that touch, that grasp, is faith.

Nowadays we hear much of 'character,' and of that we can never hear too much; it is the one thing worth taking out of life when it is time to go. The principles by which true character can be attained, and the surroundings favourable to its well-being, are matter of infinite moment for every serious mind. And to-day, in the slums of our great cities, noble-hearted women and men are toiling and planning, day and night, to fill the environment of sunken people there with rational interests and elevated amusements, in the hope of raising them to pure and reputable life. God forbid that any of us, who are probably not doing half so much, should speak one word in cold criticism of methods; all methods are required, so bewilderingly vast is the problem. At the same

time let us be well assured that in all the world only one secret exists for producing the purest and loftiest character, and that is personal faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. Nothing else puts us in immediate touch with Divine power. Nothing else uplifts us above ourselves. Nothing else has in it the sure promise of abundant victory. And only that man, in search of true nobility of nature, has the certain hope of arriving at his goal who has learnt to say, 'I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.'

¶ Nothing struck us more in Damascus than the supreme position which Dr. MacKinnon had acquired for the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society which he represented. Confronted at first with deep-rooted and not unnatural prejudice, he had transformed hatred into friendship and distrust into confidence. The people's confidence was soon won, and that of the native doctors quickly followed. . . . These very doctors who were at first afraid of the Scottish surgeon's interference with their practice soon came to beg him to undertake operations which they knew to be, on the one hand, necessary, and, on the other hand, beyond their skill.

But in Damascus nothing about Frank MacKinnon impressed the people more than his manly Christian character. He never forgot the Christian in the physician, or said smooth things to win men's favour. In the service of the King of kings he flew his flag with the cross of Christ blazoned on it, in all weathers. We heard many instances of the universal belief in his sincerity and straightforwardness.

If pride is ever justifiable, Dr. Frank MacKinnon was a man to make any one proud of Scotland, and of the Scottish Highlands, and of Medical Missions. During the war he did valuable service in Malta and in Egypt, but his noblest monument will always be the place he won for his religion and for his country in the history of Syria, and in the hearts of the people of Damascus.[1]

[1] *Lord Guthrie*, 81.

Virtue.

2 Pet. i. 5.—'Add to your faith virtue.'

THE word did not suggest, as our word 'virtue' does, either general personal excellence or special chastity of life. It is the word descriptive of a hero's character. Courage; the generosity that spurns all meanness, and would scorn to take advantage of another; the power to bear unmurmuringly, the hopeful, confident, energetic temper—this is what a Greek or a Roman would have meant by 'virtue.' The graces of chivalry would come under the name. Integrity; frankness; the mind to meet all comers in the face, knowing nothing of trick or circumvention; readiness to forgive and backwardness to take offence; courtesy; consideration for weakness; protective generosity towards inferiors; the spirit that claims the post of danger and of difficulty, and leaves the honour to those who care for it—this is what is meant by 'virtue' here. 'Nobleness' is the English word which represents it. The writer declares that the Christian must be a noble man.

Now it is extremely natural that this should be the grace that comes first in the series. Remember when this letter was written. It was written in an age when Christians were regarded as the off-scourings of the world. The sword of persecution hung above them suspended by a hair which the faintest breeze of suspicion was too often enough to sever. Under these conditions moral courage was the first necessity—that unflinching iron conviction which was ready to avow faith in a crucified Jew, opposition and danger notwithstanding. Without moral courage the Christian Church would have disappeared in half a century, like a river lost in the sands of the Sahara.

1. The 'virtue' of the text will manifest itself, first, in determining what outward things are to do for us, and then in bending them and coercing them even whilst we submit to them. Man governs Nature by obeying it, and he obeys it in order to govern it. And so we obey circumstances in order to harness

them to our ear. Though they supply the force, the guidance lies in the hand that holds the reins and pulls the bit. The strength of the Christian man will manifest itself in ruling outward things, and making them subservient, whether they be sorrowful or joyful, to the highest end of all, even his larger possession of a fuller Divine nature.

¶ It is not by seeking more fertile regions, where toil is lighter,—happier circumstances, free from difficult complications and troublesome people—but by bringing the high courage of a devout soul to bear upon what is given us, that we brighten our inward light, lead something of a true life, and introduce the kingdom of heaven into the midst of our earthly day.[1]

2. And, in like manner, the 'virtue' meant by the text will manifest itself in the rigid subjugation, by the energy of a strong will, of our own inclinations, desires, tastes, passions, and the like, which all seek to assert themselves; and the more mightily and ungoverned they work, the weaker a man is. A strong passion means a weak man; and a strong will means passions weakened and all desires and impulses tamed and taught to know the master's hand when it lifts the rod and bids, or if needful beats, the beast that is in us all into quietness and submission. There is no strength worth calling by the name in any man who has not the power of weakening and silencing his worse and lower self.

I have climbed to the snows of Age, and I gaze on a field in the past,
Where I sank with the body at times, in the sloughs of a low desire;
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the man is quiet at last
As he stands on the heights of his life, with a glimpse of a height that is higher.[2]

3. In like manner, this manly energy which all Christians are bidden in the first place to cultivate will teach us independence of other people. You are strong that you may master circumstances, and in proportion as you do this, and give the law to your nature, your strength will show itself in letting other people go their way. Let them find their own fashions of life and of work; be independent of their praise or blame, whilst profiting by their criticisms; learn not to live upon their smiles; dare to be voices and not echoes, and to take your commandments, not from the habits of your class or of your calling, but from the lips that alone have power to command, and whose approval is praise indeed.

¶ This is self-reliance—to repose calmly on the thought which is deepest in our bosoms, and be unmoved if the world will not accept it yet. To live on your own convictions against the world, is to overcome the world—to believe that what is truest for you is true for all; to abide by that, and not to be over-anxious to be heard or understood, or sympathized with, certain that at last all must acknowledge the same, and that while you stand firm, the world will come round to you; that is independence. It is not difficult to get away into retirement, and there live upon your own convictions: nor is it difficult to mix with men, and follow their convictions: but to enter into the world, and there live firmly and fearlessly according to your own conscience, that is Christian greatness.[1]

4. Once more, this 'virtue' will manifest itself in chivalrous loyalty to Christ. Sydney Smith says, and says truly, 'A great deal of talent is lost to the world for want of a little courage'; and it is equally true that a great deal of Christian faith is of no worth to the world for want of a little courage. Believers are timid and hesitating; their faith cannot stand a strain, run any serious risks, or lead a forlorn hope. This is the weakness of the Church to-day. We fail because our faith lacks courage; we expect to be beaten, and therefore are beaten. We need a new standard of Christian manhood, a fresh consecration to Christian ideals.

¶ There is something very noble in the conception of knighthood that obtained in the age

[1] J. H. Thom.
[2] Tennyson.

[1] J. M. Connell. *A Book of Devotional Readings*, 262.

of chivalry, and the ceremony of a knight's installation, with all its mediævalism, speaks of a devotion to an ideal that is as rare as it is sublime. 'The knight, after a midnight vigil in the church and reception of the Eucharist, laid his sword on the altar, in token of his consecration to a pure and blameless life. The sword was blessed and girded on his thigh by the highest ecclesiastic present. Spurs were bound on him, and he was smitten on the cheek or the shoulder, the last insult he was to bear without retaliation. He then took an oath to protect the distressed, to maintain right against might, to defend the chastity of women, and never by word or deed to stain his character as a Christian knight. His installation was then complete. If he violated his oath his spurs were struck off, his sword broken, his escutcheon reversed, and each piece of armour stripped off the recreant knight.' To be a true knight was the highest ambition of the age of chivalry. Would that there were such knightly heroes among Christians to-day, and that men were as eager to win their spurs on the field of Christian service, and as fearful of dishonouring their sacred calling. Could there be any nobler sight than that of a man, just fresh from the Creator's hands, with his energies unspent, and his heart unstained by vice, surrendering himself to goodness, purity, and truth; resolving with one all-hallowing vow to make the most of his life for God and man; refusing steadfastly ever after to renounce or lower his ideal, and growing in wisdom and influence, as surely as the light waxes brighter and brighter to the perfect day?[1]

5. And, finally, it will have its opportunity in daily life. Did the writer possibly foresee a modern day in which some superior people would declare that Christianity was a mild, inadequate form of excellence, a very proper sort of thing for women, and sick persons, and timid folk, and those who are unfortunate or oppressed, or of weak intelligence; very proper where resignation, passive endurance, and the ignoring of injury are the best practicable policy; but quite below the needs of the strong, capable adventurous man, full of blood and courage, whose business is to fight for himself in the world, and who has got the sinews to do it with? Perhaps he had not to foresee those days; perhaps already in his time a Christian was thought to be a tame, mild person, who did not know how to stand up for himself, one who had (that is the modern phrase) the passive virtues, but not the virtues of a man.

It was a strange mistake to make, no doubt; for when had a man in the same brief space of time put forth upon his fellows an energy such as that which Christ put forth in His brief career? Of whom could it be said, as of Him, that 'virtue had gone out of him'? Or which of the great men of action, the world's Alexanders and Cæsars, have been 'in labours more abundant,' or have laid on human history so potent a touch as did St. Paul?

¶ See what a Christian is, drawn by the hand of Christ. He is a man on whose clear and open brow God has set the stamp of truth: one whose very eye beams bright with honour; in whose very look and bearing you may see freedom, manliness, veracity: a brave man. . . . Young men! if you have been deterred from religion by its apparent feebleness and narrowness, Remember—It is a manly thing to be a Christian.[1]

¶ When Martin Luther walked into the imperial council hall of Charles V. at Worms to meet his enemies, a famous general tapped him on the shoulder and said, 'My poor monk! my poor monk! thou art marching to make a stand, the like of which I, and many a general, in our gravest battles have never made.'[2]

[1] G. Hanson, *A Chain of Graces*, 17.

Knowledge.

2 Pet. i. 5.—'And to virtue knowledge.'

Many a man's intellectual awakening dates from his spiritual birth. His faith in God has set him studying the things that God has made, and the world which He is guiding to glorious issues. He finds new interest in tracing out his own history now that the gloom

[1] F. W. Robertson.
[2] H. E. Fosdick, *Twelve Tests of Character*, 151.

and terror of self-knowledge have been taken away. The Bible and Christian experience have made clear to him many a perplexing riddle. There is no contradiction between faith and knowledge; they move in different and supplementary spheres. The deepest truth in relation to all things can be ours only by faith; but there is no way in which faith can be made to do the work of knowledge.

But 'knowledge' is a wide word, especially when you do not add the object with which it is concerned. What is the object of the knowledge spoken about here?

1. Among the different kinds of knowledge, there is one department of transcendent importance. It is that knowledge which, in a flood of overwhelming illumination, burst in on the proud pupil of Gamaliel, and in a moment subdued him into the lowly disciple of Jesus Christ. It is that knowledge which, in the case of similar fervid spirits, has again and again produced the same effects—constraining them to cast aside the Encyclopædia in favour of the Gospel, and making them feel as if all their anterior acquirements were an elaborate ignorance, and all their boasted wisdom an ingenious folly. And making every allowance for the different ways in which men are brought to the knowledge of the Saviour—the slow, dim dawning whose commencement can scarcely be recalled in the remoteness of early instruction, or the midnight of unbelief flashing into the instant and perfect day of Christian conviction—making every reasonable allowance, a man has too much cause to fear that he does not know the Saviour at all, if he does not count as the most excellent knowledge the knowledge of Christ crucified, and if, in the event of its coming to a competition between the learning of the schools and the revelation of life everlasting, he is not prepared to count everything but loss compared with the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.

The aim of the natural man is to know more of the things that he sees. A Christian's aim should be to know more of those things in which he believes. If they are worthy to be apprehended by faith, they are worthy to be known. But the objects of faith are too great and wonderful for our understanding. Yes, and for that very reason we should, like the angels of God, look with the greater desire into those things. If we love much, we shall know much. Those know God and Divine things best who possess most of His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the very soul of knowledge. God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. He that loves God has God. And 'unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance.' And abundance here is an abundance of life. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.'

¶ The knowledge of God as described to us in Scripture is no cold, intellectual estimate of His perfections, but rather that intimate delighting in them, that powerfully felt attraction, which makes the very expressions of knowledge and love as applied to man's communion with his Maker interchangeable. We often say of earthly things—

> That we must love them ere we know
> That they are worthy to be loved.

We may confess of many things and of many people that they are indeed lovely and desirable, *but what are they to us* until the heart has taught us at once our own need and their exceeding worth and value?

And even thus, though after a manner unrecognisable to human sense, we need to be 'drawn' to God. He whom no man hath seen nor can see at any time can only become the delight and desire of the soul, according to the degree in which He is pleased to reveal unto it His beauty, and impart unto it the sense of His satisfying goodness. We *can* only love God according to the measure in which we know and are known of Him.[1]

2. To this, however, let him add another knowledge, a knowledge which is a practical insight into what Christian people ought to do, not only in general, but in accordance

[1] Dora Greenwell, *The Covenant of Life*, 129.

with the circumstances and demands of the instant. It comes to be very much the same thing as what we call in secular phraseology tact, insight, prudence, *savoir-faire;* a quick perception of what is the right thing to say and to do, at the right moment. The writer of the Epistle argues thus: It is a great thing not only that you should have the faith which lays hold of God, and the strength which comes from that, but that such faith and strength should be illuminated by a knowledge, a quick, instinctive perception, of Christian duty in general, and in the special circumstances of the moment.

It is well that we should insist upon reason, judgment, reflection holding the tiller, but it is of more importance still that we should settle under whose orders we are sailing, and what chart we have lying before us. The prudence that is preached to us here as a Christian duty is not merely the creeping virtue which the world calls prudence, which consists mainly in a very sharp scent of what is for our own advantage, or in a timid, clear apprehension of possible risks; but it consists in knowing how to apply the great principles of the gospel moment by moment, swiftly and certainly, to the incidents of our daily life as they emerge. That is what is meant by, as the RV puts it, 'supply in your strength knowledge.' Let the perception of duty be a perception illuminated and determined by the principles of the gospel, and bring that law to bear upon all life.

Such a continual reference of daily exigencies and circumstances to the great principles that lie in Christ and His revelation will take the place of that selfish and secular tact and instinct which the world prizes so highly. It will give delicacy to roughness, sympathy to the hard, tact to the clumsy, and will bring a simplicity of motive and a suppression of self which are the best possible preparations for seeing clearly what the will of the Lord is. 'Be ye wise as serpents,' and, that ye may be so, 'be harmless as doves.' 'Supply in your strength knowledge.'

> The acknowledgment of God in Christ
> Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
> All questions in the earth and out of it,
> And has so far advanced thee to be wise.[1]

Temperance.

2 Pet. i. 6.—'And to knowledge temperance.'

Temperance has come in common parlance to be used as the synonym of abstinence, total or partial, from intoxicants; but the word had originally a much wider signification. It means 'self-control' in the largest sense, and applies to every appetite, emotion, fancy, or purpose that a man can cherish. Self-control is the power of keeping oneself well in hand, of governing one's passions, of restraining oneself from outbursts of anger, from excessive devotion to pleasure or riches or what not. Self-control is the captain on the bridge of the soul, directing the frail vessel's course through wind and wave, so that it may not be driven hither and thither at the mercy of the elements, or tossed a hopeless wreck upon the shore.

1. Now notice the place in the evolution of Christian graces in which the writer sets temperance. Add to your faith manly energy, and to your manly energy a clear perception of Christian duty at each given moment; and then let these three things, faith, strength, insight, work upon you, and they will make the impossible possible. That is to say, if you wish to govern yourselves, begin with faith. We rule ourselves when we let Jesus Christ rule us. Trust brings Him into our hearts as King, and that King will bring order and peace. Where He comes, the rebel desires and passions will cower before Him,

> As if they surely knew their sov'ran Lord
> was by.

The Christian man, thinking of his conflict, and knowing that, with his ten thousand, it is hard for him to meet the twenty thousand who are arrayed against him, invokes, as some petty chief of a weak tribe might, the aid of the

[1] Browning.

great Emperor whose dominions are at hand, and when he stretches his protecting power over the little territory there is victory for its trembling prince. So give up the sovereignty of your soul to Jesus Christ, and He will give you the strength to govern yourself successfully.

2. Again, remember the 'virtue' which is developed from faith. That virtue is mainly the strength of a resolved will. You can get your enslaved will liberated, if by faith you look to Jesus Christ. He will reinforce its feebleness, will stay its tremulousness, will give it power to command and to coerce. There is only one hand that can put on the brake and keep it down, and that is your own. And the only way by which you can keep the brake on your worse self is to let Christ lay His strong hand on your weak one, and add the weight of its pressure to yours. He will strengthen your will, if you will let Him, and by that strengthened will you will be able to control yourself. If I am in Christ, it is not a question of one part of my nature governing another; it is a question of the higher nature, which is His, flowing into mine, and so enabling me, the true me, which is Christ in me, to keep down the animal that is in me and the evil that attaches to me.

3. And this brings us to a third condition of self-command—that knowledge of which the preceding clause speaks, which is plainly a clear insight into Christian duty. If we have that duty distinctly before us, if by faith and manly vigour, keeping us willing to do Christ's will, we learn distinctly what the will of the Lord is concerning us, that clear insight will largely aid us to govern ourselves. If we have always blazing clear before us that solemn imperative, and the will of the Lord is plain before our eyes, it will deliver us from many of the illusions of this witch's cave of a fleeting world, where dead leaves pass for gold, and all manner of hideous things are taken to be precious dainties. If we have once clear in sight the dictates of an enlightened conscience, felt to be Christ's will, then it will not be so hard to put the screw on all that rebels against Him, and to stimulate (for that is a part of self-command) the lagging and slothful graces of our hearts.

So the necessity of self-control,which is an impossibility for everybody else, is a possibility for the weakest among us, if we let Christ rule in our hearts. His subjects are princes, and holding fast by Him, listening to His commandments, with wills strengthened by the inbreathing of His good Spirit, and consciences illuminated by the radiance of His perceived and loved will, we shall be able to rule as kings within our own spirits, and to subdue all the evil which still may lurk and linger there. 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.' Put the reins into Christ's hands, and He will make you kings over yourselves and priests unto Him.[1]

¶ One of the largest rivers in the world is known by the name of 'China's sorrow.' The banks through which the Yellow River flows for nearly a thousand miles of its course are so low and so friable, that, with the first flush of the spring floods, away they sink, and thousands of square miles of country are laid under water. It is not hemmed in by granite or limestone gorges like its great and incomparably useful neighbour the Yang Tsze. Its torrents are unrestrained. Within historical times it has shifted its course altogether, and discharges itself into the sea some hundreds of miles away from the old mouth. Although a river of first class dimensions, counted by the volume of water it discharges, for nearly a thousand miles of its course it is scarcely navigable. It is a colossal power for good wasted through the lack of strong, binding power in its banks. And there are not a few people who are like this capricious river in the career they follow. We might perhaps describe them as 'the Church's sorrow.' There is uncommon virtue or potency in their characters, and they are not altogether wanting in knowledge. But through the lack of this temperance or 'self-restraint' they break out at given periods like 'China's sorrow,' and make schism and faction in the Church, and

[1] A. Maclaren.

fritter away their own capacity for usefulness, and possibly in the end shift their course into altogether unexpected channels. To 'virtue' and 'knowledge' they have failed to add 'temperance' and their very religion is maimed and halt and blind.[1]

[1] T. G. Selby, *The Imperfect Angel*, 164.

SELF-CONTROL.

2 Pet. i. 6.—'In your knowledge temperance.'
Gal. v. 22, 23.—'The fruit of the spirit is . . . temperance.'
1 Cor. ix. 25.—'And every man that striveth in the games is temperate in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.'
Prov. xvi. 32.—'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.'

The Second Epistle of Peter tells us of God's high ideal for man 'whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust'; and from this high ideal and gift on God's part the writer infers the strong necessity of action on our part. We are to add all diligence; we are to bring in our contribution. Then he points out the steps by which we are to become partakers. God gives us faith; we are to supply virtue, in virtue knowledge, in knowledge self-control. Similarly in the long list of the fruits of the Spirit the last and final fruit is this same self-control.

Self-control is one of the perfections of the ideal man. It marks that point on the dial-plate of character which denotes the equilibrium of its varied powers. It is, in fact, the perfect poise of a man's mental and moral qualities. What we call a well-balanced nature is an essential condition of self-control. To be self-controlled, therefore, does not necessarily imply the possession of any extraordinary ability. The man possessing this power, looked at from the standpoint of any single talent, may be commonplace, a man of only moderate powers; but he is a force in the community, recognized as such by his associates and not infrequently accepted by them as a leader, simply because his powers, commonplace though they be, are held in perfect mastery, subservient to the one purpose he has in view. There is no warring of interests in his soul, no strife between his will and his emotions, no divorce between his ambitions and his ideals. His nature is in perfect poise—he has learned the secret of self-control.

¶ Every step in the progress of the world has been a new 'control'; it has been escaping from the tyranny of a fact to the understanding and mastery of that fact. For ages man looked in terror at the lightning-flash; to-day he has begun to understand it as electricity, a force he has mastered and made his slave. The million phases of electrical invention are but manifestations of our control over a great force. But the greatest of all 'control' is self-control, or, as the Bible most frequently translates it, temperance.[1]

The perfect poise that comes of self-control,
  The poetry of action, rhythmic, sweet,—
That unvexed music of the body and soul
That the Greeks dreamed of, made at last
    complete—
  Our stumbling lives attain not such a bliss;
Too often, while the air we vainly beat,
  Love's perfect law of liberty we miss.[2]

I.

THE ATTAINMENT OF SELF-CONTROL.

How, then, is self-control to be attained?

1. The first step in self-control is *self-knowledge*. Self-control is closely related to knowledge; it grows out of knowledge; it is using Christian knowledge for the guidance of life.

[1] Professor Blackie.
[2] Annie Matheson.

It means that we have learned to know what is the Christian ideal of life, and to know what helps and what hinders the growth of that life. But it also means a knowledge of ourselves. And by self-knowledge in this connection is principally meant that sincerity with ourselves which renders us aware of our failings, and puts us on our guard against them. We do not need to practise any morbid introspection to know quite well which are our weak spots, at what points we are threatened by danger, where our defences need strengthening if they are to prove efficient in case of a sudden attack. It is said of Captain Scott, the Antarctic explorer, 'The faults of his youth must have lived on in him as in all of us, but he got to know they were there and he took an iron grip of them and never let go his hold. It was this self-control, more than anything else, that made the man of him of whom we have all become so proud.'[1]

¶ How many excuses does the drunkard find when each new temptation comes! It is a new brand of liquor which the interests of intellectual culture in such matters oblige him to test; moreover it is poured out and it is sin to waste it; also others are drinking and it would be churlishness to refuse. Or it is but to enable him to sleep, or just to get through this job of work; or it isn't drinking, it is because he feels so cold; or it is Christmas-day; or it is a means of stimulating him to make a more powerful resolution in favour of abstinence than any he has hitherto made; or it is just this once, and once doesn't count, etc., etc., *ad libitum*—it is, in fact, anything you like except *being a drunkard*. *That* is the conception that will not stay before the poor soul's attention. But if he once gets able to pick out that way of conceiving, from all the other possible ways of conceiving the various opportunities which occur, if through thick and thin he hold to it that this is being a drunkard and is nothing else, he is not likely to remain one long. The effort by which he succeeds in keeping the right *name* unwaveringly present to his mind proves to be his saving moral act.[2]

[1] C. Turley, *The Voyages of Captain Scott*, 8.
[2] William James.

2. The second step in self-control is *intention*. But it is not enough to know. Aristotle reminds us that we must distinguish between the knowledge we possess and the knowledge we command. Having come to a knowledge of our own weaknesses and failings, we must resolutely use that knowledge—we must intend to exercise self-control. Self-control, therefore, becomes an act of the will.

Now the will is controlled by ideas, and is, in fact, nothing more than our ideas in operation. In proportion to the strength with which an idea takes possession of the mind is the energy of the will in realizing it. 'The essential achievement of the will is to ATTEND to a difficult object and hold it fast before the mind.' 'The strong-willed man,' says William James, 'is the man who hears the still small voice unflinchingly, and who, when the death-bringing consideration comes, looks at its face, consents to its presence, clings to it, affirms it, and holds it fast, in spite of the host of exciting mental images which rise in revolt against it and would expel it from the mind. Sustained in this way by a resolute effort of attention, the difficult object ere long begins to call up its own congeners and associates and ends by changing the disposition of the man's consciousness altogether.'[1] To intend self-control, then, becomes a case of fixing the mind unswervingly, not on the impulse to be controlled, but on the ideas associated with the state of mind we desire to substitute for the one that is tempting us astray.

¶ We can resist the seductions of this and that distracting, luring, beckoning thought; we can say, 'This one thing I do,' by calling up, and again recalling, the idea of the task which has the first claim upon our energy and attention. 'Consent to the idea's undivided presence; this is effort's sole achievement.' Neither you nor I always feel in the mood for responding to the demands of duty; but our business is to master our moods, to collect our minds and energies, to concentrate, and so, by asserting power, to acquire it more abundantly. And is not in every kind of temptation our success or failure ultimately just a matter of self-control, and this again a matter of

[1] William James.

mind-control—keeping one idea steadily, and maybe with an effort, in the centre of the field of mental vision, or else letting it be displaced, edged out, blurred and overlaid by other ideas, other and more fascinating mind-pictures? Here is a man in whose mind two ideas struggle for predominance—outward success or inward peace; a mean triumph or continued self-respect; thirty pieces of silver or loyalty to Christ; the gratification of desire or an unstained conscience; and the point to emphasize again and again is that we can attend to the one or to the other of these ideas, and throw our whole selves into the scale.[1]

3. The third step in self-control is *habit*. 'A character,' as J. S. Mill says, 'is a completely fashioned will'; and a will, in the sense in which he means it, is an aggregate of tendencies to act in a firm and prompt and definite way upon all the principal emergencies of life. A tendency to act only becomes effectively ingrained in us in proportion to the uninterrupted frequency with which the actions actually occur, and the brain 'grows' to their use. When a resolve or a fine glow of feeling is allowed to evaporate without bearing practical fruit it is worse than a chance lost; it works so as positively to hinder future resolutions and emotions from taking the normal path of discharge.[2] Each lapse is like the letting fall of a ball of string which one is carefully winding up; a single slip undoes more than a great many turns will wind again. *Continuity* of training is the great means of making the nervous system act infallibly right.

It is only the man who habituates himself to self-control who can show self-control at the moment of need. Great and brilliant deeds, rousing the heroic, sound much more attractive than rigid self-control; but such are only the crises that reveal the long, dull, slow processes that have disciplined the soul to the possibility of heroism. We read in our morning paper of a theatre or some other crowded building taking fire during a performance or meeting. We read of a large number of the people 'losing their heads,' giving way to 'panic,' and of more lives being lost through crushing, suffocation, and being trampled upon than by the actual fire. Now why did the people 'lose their heads,' and why was there any panic? Was it not their habitual condition of mind coming to the front in an unguarded moment and under unexpected circumstances 'Fixed attitudes of mind determine courses of conduct,' said a great Teacher. In a sudden emergency or catastrophe, where there is no time to reason or calculate, then it is that a man acts from his *fixed habit of mind*.

¶ As a final practical maxim, relative to these habits of the will, we may, then, offer something like this: '*Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day.*' That is, be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points, do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it, so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test. Asceticism of this sort is like the insurance which a man pays on his house and goods. The tax does him no good at the time, and possibly may never bring him a return. But if the fire *does* come, his having paid it will be his salvation from ruin. So with the man who has daily inured himself to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition, and self-denial in unnecessary things. He will stand like a tower when everything rocks around him, and when his softer fellow-mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast. . . . Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone. Every smallest stroke of virtue or of vice leaves its never so little scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying, 'I won't count this time!' Well! he may not count it, and a kind Heaven may not count it; but it is being counted none the less. Down among his nerve-cells and fibres the molecules are counting it, registering and stor-

[1] J. Warschauer, *Challenge and Cheer*, 42.
[2] William James.

ing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out. Of course this has its good side as well as its bad one. As we become permanent drunkards by so many separate drinks, so we become saints in the moral, and authorities and experts in the practical and scientific spheres, by so many separate acts and hours of work. Let no youth have any anxiety about the upshot of his education, whatever the line of it may be. If he keep faithfully busy each hour of the working day, he may safely leave the final result to itself. He can with perfect certainty count on waking up some fine morning to find himself one of the competent ones of his generation, in whatever pursuit he may have singled out. Silently, between all the details of his business, the *power of judging* in all that class of matter will have built itself up within him as a possession that will never pass away.[1]

II.

THE VALUE OF SELF-CONTROL.

That self-control is the condition of success in every walk of life, sacred or secular, history and biography leave us in no doubt. It is equally necessary for both good and bad ends. 'Ferdinand of Spain,' said the Emperor Napoleon, 'is a man incapable of governing himself, and of course he is incapable of governing the Peninsula.' And not only does the ruler of a nation require self-control; it is a quality required in all kinds of places and on many occasions.

¶ Dr. Scott Holland remarks of the self-control of the London busman: 'London is the School of Saints. No one could doubt this who habitually travels on the top of a 'bus and watches the long, enormous trail of London traffic, crawling and oozing, and tumbling, and bulging along the tortuous streets. What courtesy it needs, to steer it through! What spiritual discipline! What detachment! What self-mastery! What sweetness of temper! What urbanity of speech! And yet your 'bus driver never fails you. Amid the turbid throng, that bustles and jostles round him, he retains the mind of an Angel and wears the smile of Paradise. Yet could any life be more wildly aggravating? To stand blocked at the crossings, while the interminable things go by, that out of sheer perversity have set themselves to traverse your path! To pull up at the bidding of the merciless bell, at the very minute in which you had whipped up your nags for a little clear run! To be checked, just as you start afresh, on account of one old fat lady, who might just as well have got in half a second before, when you were standing still! To be arrested by the conductor for no apparent reason at all! To be bullied by lady riders on bicycles, who slide also under your horses' noses, and challenge you to kill them if you dare! To be always sent on, when you want to stop; and stopped when you want to go on! Why! it would drive a Saint wild. It would distract a St. Anthony. It would wreck the nerves of St. Francis. But your 'bus driver is in secure possession of his soul. Nothing disturbs the quiet serenity of the empurpled countenance on the box. At the worst, a little mild chaff falls from his lips on to the head of some irritating conductor of a rival 'bus, or he kindly suggests to the inordinate Peeler who holds us up for apparent hours at a crossing that he had better make haste, for the Missis is expecting him home to tea. But the good humour of it is unbroken; the broad tolerance that has learned to gauge all the infirmities of human nature beams from his buried eyes over the ruddy fullness of his face. Not a pucker spoils the smoothness of the cherubic brow, as "he rides the whirlwind and directs the storm." The voice, though a little thick in tone, is rich with compassion. "Lor! bless yer 'eart! what's the good of making a fuss!" That is the confirmed expression that breaks from out of every feature. Taking it all round, it is a superb display of self-control.'[1]

1. What the value in life of this great quality is we can see more clearly by realizing what the lack of it entails.

[1] William James.

[1] H. S. Holland, *A Bundle of Memories*, 268.

(1) The lack of self-control is the beginning of sin. The great principle represented by the tree in the midst of the Garden is the principle of self-control. The lack of self-control led to the fearful consequences we are too familiar with. In Dante's Hell, we find that the sinners in the first circles are there through lack of self-control. All other sins follow in the wake of this first failure.

¶ If you wish to sink into degradation and contempt, and for ever blast every hope of happiness and usefulness, the way to do it is easy. You have but to let the bodily appetites have their own way, and eat of the forbidden fruit, and drink of those stolen waters which are sweet, and you have chosen a straight path—but its end is destruction. You will simply be repeating in actual life the old Eastern story of the man who called up demons to fill his water jars. Quickly and silently they did his will, but when the jars were full, they kept on pouring. Then, as Whittier tells us—

Higher and higher rose the floods around,
Till the fiends clapped their hands above
their master—drowned.[1]

(2) The lack of self-control makes progress impossible. We have seen that self-control means energy and concentration of power. The lack of it, then, must mean dissipation of energy and waste of power. Continuous purpose becomes impossible, and no forward movement can be made. Of Fox, the statesman, it has been said, 'He was possessed of that characteristic weakness of the Romantic spirit, lack of self-control, which renders it impossible to trace any continuous thread of purpose running throughout his career.'

¶ In one of her 'Poems of Experience,' Ella Wheeler Wilcox reminds us that until self-control has been attained there can be no progress:—

Over and over the task was set,
Over and over I slighted the work,
But ever and alway I knew that yet
I must face and finish the toil I shirk.

Over and over the whip of pain
Has spurred and punished with blow on
blow;
As ever and alway I tried in vain
To shun the labour I hated so.

Over and over I came this way
For just one purpose: O stubborn soul!
Turn with a will to your work to-day,
And learn the lesson of *Self-Control.*

2. The attainment of self-control gives to life just those things of which the lack of self-control deprives it.

(1) Self-control builds up character. The value of self-control is greatest where most has to be controlled. Men's temperaments vary so vastly that one person may have more passion or irritability or fear to control in a day than another in a year, so much so that in most cases, when judging others, it will be our wisdom to recall the poet's line, 'We know not what's resisted.' It may often happen that when the obvious results are smallest, the greatest self-control has been exercised. Slowly, in ways hidden but none the less sure, the unseen power within is building up and strengthening the character of the man who exercises it. It is of the very essence of self-control that it should not be paraded. The man who rules his own spirit is greater than he who takes a city for this very reason, that others do not know the cost.

(2) The world is very apt to be carried away by mere noise and show, and it is often so taken up by mere attendant circumstances that it never thinks of looking deeper, and estimating exactly the true value of a thing. It will thus see in him that taketh a city the really great man, because the exploit is attended with all that pomp of circumstance which counts for so much in the vulgar eye. The very *loneliness of spiritual struggle* adds to the hardness of the strife and the glory of the victory. The eye of the world is a wonderful stimulus to all effort. With what redoubled energy does the youth pursue his game if he knows that a crowd is looking on! How is the soldier, from the commander down to the humblest private, stimulated by the thought that every move in the battle is being

[1] J. W. Jack, *After His Likeness*, 180.

watched, and that it will be sharply criticized by the world! Thus does the very fact that a thing is being done in the face of day help towards its success and accomplishment.

But how little of this help has he who fights the battle for self-mastery! In the depths of his spirit the struggle goes on, and what does the world know or care about it? It can neither stimulate him by its applause, nor goad him on by fear of its censure. Thus is he deprived of a stimulus which, as much perhaps as anything else, sustains and inspires him who fights his battle in the face of the world.

(3) But another thing which adds to the hardness of the spiritual struggle, and consequently to the glory of the spiritual victory, is the constancy and steadfastness necessary to insure a successful issue. After all, he who takes a city may take it with a rush; or, failing this, a few months', or at most a few years', siege will reduce it; but he who would gain and keep the rule over self has no such speedily accomplished task before him. He is engaged in a warfare which can end only with his existence here. Only when he lays down his life can he lay down his arms. This it is which makes the spiritual strife so hard for flesh and blood to maintain.

(4) Once more, we find in the *enemies with which we have to contend* another reason why the spiritual struggle is harder, and therefore more glorious, than any other. He who taketh a city has at best flesh and blood to contend with, and therefore fights the battle on something like equal terms. But what saith the Apostle? 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' All that is meant by these words of the Apostle we cannot perhaps fully understand; but this at least they make clear to us, that it is against no small opposition that any man, in the spiritual life, will fight his way to victory. Even looking within our own hearts, what a formidable array of spiritual enemies do we behold! Each heart can best count them for itself. Each heart best can tell which is the fiercest and most unruly. Each heart knows how earnestly, perhaps with what agony, it has striven to subdue them, and how often, alas! with poor success. But poor success should never lead, in the spiritual life at least, to utter abandonment. If the end be a right one, even struggle towards it cannot but be good. The very greatness of the difficulties to be encountered will but add to the glory of the victory when finally it is achieved; and of its achievement why need we despair when the promises are so great and precious, and the grace so freely offered which helps in time of need?

> The trail is through dolour and dread, over crags and morasses;
> There are shapes by the way, there are things that appal or entice us:
> What odds? We are Knights of the Grail, we are vowed to the riding.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> We spur to a land of no-name, outracing the storm-wind;
> We leap to the infinite dark like sparks from the anvil.
> Thou leadest, O God! All's well with Thy troopers that follow.[1]

3. Self-control makes progress possible by giving us control over others. Progress may be the work of individual men; but in reality they are only the originators. They must move other individuals before they can move the world. To control others is impossible without control over ourselves. Public speakers have over and over again won their audiences by demonstrations of self-control in the face of anger and calumny.

¶ Of William Morris it is said: 'His patience and tolerance as a speaker argued magnificent self-control in a man of Morris's temperament. The violent criticisms of other Socialists never disturbed him, as it would have done a more self-centred man. At one of the West London meetings, a well-known anarchist got up and accused him of talking "d—— nonsense!" Morris did not comment; he went on with his speech, and at the close, when those around him on the platform fully expected he would turn and rend the inter-

[1] Louise Imogen Guiney.

rupter, he went up to him, took his arm, and invited him back to supper and a chat. He knew the man was a genuine man behind all his violence. He was willing to talk the matter out as man to man, and this individual became one of his greatest admirers. He knew how few would have treated him as Morris did.'[1]

III.

THE AIM AND END OF SELF-CONTROL.

It is important to notice that self-control differs from the other 'fruits of the spirit' in being not so much a positive virtue in itself as a means leading to virtue. It is not in itself an end, but makes other ends possible.

1. The end of self-control may be *an evil end.* The end in view will, of course, depend on the character of the person exercising the control, and with a sufficient motive self-control is possible to all. The most disagreeable things are done by men, and men of sensitive nerve, if there be money in them. Did you ever read the history of the training of men for prize-fights? They are trained for weeks, and months if need be, before the great conflict comes off; and the fundamental rule laid down for a man who is to be trained as a prize-fighter is temperance. He becomes a model of temperance and regularity, admired by every hygienist who looks upon the experiment. He continues this for one month, two months, three months if necessary, until his whole system glows with the beauty of temperance. Here is this training the body to toughness, to endurance, to elasticity, to perfect health and vigour; here is the bringing up of an absolute physical manhood to the highest possible standard, followed day and night without wavering, for weeks and for months—and for what? For the conflict of an hour and a half or two hours. With most brutal results, to be sure; but then there was the motive. Such a motive as tempts prize fighters may not be absolutely bad; but there are bad ends served by the finest self-control.

¶ Bad men as well as good have been conspicious for self-control. Virtuous tendencies may require to be held in check, lest they should hurry and betray their subject to some act above the level of his deliberately chosen standard of life. 'Distrust your first thoughts,' advises a cynical French writer, 'for they are good.' Thoroughly on his guard must have been that mediæval captain who, in a campaign in Northern Italy, displayed a banner with the inscription, 'I am Duke Warner; the enemy of God and of pity.' Rochefoucauld has remarked that 'Il y a des héros en mal comme en bien,' and Milton's Satan is an example of supreme self-control. Self is that which a proud man can control when all else has passed out of his power. Others besides martyrs and confessors have exemplified the power of a strong will over a nature that is to be subdued to its purpose, and it is no paradox to affirm that self-control is as necessary to great wickedness as it is to great virtue.[1]

2. The true end of self-control is *not mere repression.* Self-mastery must not be a mere restraint, a holding ourselves back; it must be a positive and definite making the lower serve the higher. In its merely repressive and restrictive operations it has no moral character of its own. The end desired is not to curb all impulses and turn men into cold, reasoning, lifeless beings. There is no sin in *having,* but only in *gratifying,* craving; and the man with no urgent desires is not living the best life. The self-controlled or resolute man feels the influence of the Siren pleasure, but does not yield to her.

¶ The repressive method has been tried over and over again, and, at most, it has produced only a colourless virtue, wanting alike in courage and in sympathy. The lower 'Don't' from without is insufficient unless followed by a higher 'Do' from within. When Ulysses' vessel neared the island of the Sirens he had himself tied to the mast lest he should go after them. But Orpheus found a sufficient escape even from the wish to heed their seductive voices in the sweeter music of his own lyre.

The true philosophy of life is intensely positive, and the denials it imposes are always for the sake of something better. It encour-

[1] A. G. Rickett, *William Morris,* 238.

[1] T. Walker.

ages hobbies, and is not so much afraid of enthusiasms as of the lack of them. Human nature abhors a vacuum, and will try to fill it in some way. The final purpose of moral discipline is to build up such a strong, clean character that, while rejecting what is, in its very essence, a foe to self-realization, we are able to make everything which properly belongs to us a servitor of righteousness. As quaint George Herbert puts it,

> 'Correct thy passion's spite,
> Then may the beasts draw thee to happy light.' [1]

3. The true end of self-control is *growth in likeness to Christ.* Soldiers have to be drilled, but the drill is not an end in itself; they have to be drilled in order that they may fight. But is the fighting an end in itself? Surely not. It is only with a view to the attainment of some higher good, which is presumably desired by some wise and beneficent will. The end of self-discipline for the Christian will then be the possibility of carrying out the will of God. What is profitable for that grand service of Christ which demands body, soul, and spirit; and what is profitable to enable me to have body, soul, and spirit in such a state as constantly to please Him in all things? The answer is summed up in one word, *self-control.* To the Christian, therefore, the end of 'temperance' is a greater end than it was to the Greeks, who set so high a value upon it. To the Greek, the 'end' of temperance, as of the other virtues, was the maintenance of a high level of civilization among a comparatively small group of cultured equals—supported by the labour and ministered to by the moral degradation of the great mass of the population. To us it is no less than the development in all who are capable of it—and all who bear the human shape are capable of it in some degree—of the elements of our common humanity. With this enlarged ideal of the end which is to be served goes an enlarged conception of the sacrifices which may be entailed by the service. From the Greek all that seemed to be required was such self-denial as was implied in abstaining from all excesses that would unfit a man for the performance of his civil or military duties. Under modern conditions individuals and classes may find themselves, in addition to this minimum, called upon, for the sake of objects which to the Greek would have seemed wholly impalpable and illusory, to accept a life in which the pleasures of the senses or even of the mind have little or no place.

Following on this enlarged conception of the 'end' has come a more vivid sense of its spirituality. The beautiful object is not confined to the favoured members of any race or city, but consists in the development of the qualities of mind and character that are characteristic of man. Indulgences, therefore, the relation of which to this human ideal was obscured by the narrowness with which it was conceived, are now seen to be incompatible with it. Loyalty to the wider ideal implies a more exacting standard in the individual's own life. Temperance not only has a broader basis: it moves on a higher plane. It is true that to the Greek temperance was to be attained by a firm hold on the true values of things, but just because we have had through Christ a truer revelation of values than was possible to the Greek, our understanding of the end of self-control must needs be truer also. To bring ourselves into the likeness of Christ is the object of all self-discipline; and no one was ever more perfectly self-controlled than Christ.

¶ There is but one way to attain to that strength of will by which the higher faculties completely control the lower. We see the perfect example, God who became man, complete in His self-control. Amidst hostile mobs He calmly passed through the midst; when smitten on the face He quietly reasoned; when in the high-priest's hall He had leisure to turn and look upon the disciple who denied; when on the cross He gave peace to the dying robber, and He prayed for His murderers. And it is as the Great Will stoops down and enfolds our wills that they are energized and made strong, magnetized by His great power. True knowledge brings not pride or licence, but humility and self-control. Whoso taketh up

[1] W. T. Herridge, *The Orbit of Life*, 71.

his cross alone can follow. Be assured that before the moment of testing can reveal the splendour of your triumph the long, slow processes of quiet self-control must be yours; will, strength, all uplifted and energized by Him who looks that in you may be revealed once more His image, that you may be partaker of His nature.[1]

Patience.

2 Pet. i. 6.—'And to temperance patience.'

Temperance and patience are somewhat alike: what is the difference between them? Temperance or self-control has to do with what is internal, with man's own passions and propensities; 'patience' has to do with what is external, with the afflictions and injuries that come upon a man from without. The duty of 'self-control' naturally precedes the duty of 'patience,' because a man's first business is to conquer and rule himself; and it is only when he is master of himself that he can hope to be master of his circumstances. If he cannot fight the evil in his own heart he will never make a firm stand in the battle against evil without. If he cannot restrain himself, the inner citadel of his life is in the enemy's hands, and it matters little about the outworks. 'Self-control' naturally comes before 'patience,' and the two must never be dissociated.

1. Patience is more than endurance. Endurance is a splendid quality, and without it nothing great would ever be accomplished. One cannot but admire the endurance of an ambitious student like the great Lord Ellenborough, who kept before his eyes on his study table the words 'Read or starve,' and roused himself, whenever he felt weary of his work, by a glance at the warning above his desk; or the endurance of the soldier who marches and fights and starves and suffers for his country's sake, bearing bravely and grimly, if not wholly uncomplainingly, the hardships of the campaign; or the endurance of the long-suffering parent who hides deep in his or her heart the distress of some domestic grief or shame, and with a bright face to the world asks for no outsider's pity and guards the honour of the family name from prying eyes and curious tongues; or the endurance of the bread-winner who struggles to keep the wolf from the door, who even with failing health maintains the unequal fight for the sake of wife and children, and would rather starve than beg, rather die than yield. It is difficult to imagine anything more sublime than such fortitude. But patience is more than such brave facing of odds, more than such grim determination, more than such persistent and victorious industry, more than such loyal shielding of the family credit.

2. Patience is 'Christian' endurance. Observe that it comes in a series of virtues dependent on faith. That is the reservoir of electric force which passes through link after link of the wire that is hooked on in succession to its preceding link. Faith passes through energy, knowledge, self-control, and pours itself into the patience which is developed from these, but is produced by it. The possibility of the right endurance of suffering depends upon our firm grasp of the verities which faith brings us; and that in two ways.

(1) Patience is possible when beneath all our sorrows, be they great or small, we recognize God's will. Every other prop on which a heart tries to lean in its desolation crumbles and gives way except this: 'It is the Lord! Let Him do what seemeth good.' To your faith add patience.

¶ It is told of John Eliot, the Apostle of the Red Indians, as he has been called, that, as four out of his six children were in turn removed by death, and men were marvelling how he could go on uninterruptedly with his missionary work, Eliot, having heard of this, said, 'I have had six children, and I bless God for His free grace; they are all either with Christ or in Christ, and my mind is now at rest concerning them!' On being asked how he could bear the death of such excellent children, the missionary replied, 'My desire was that they should have served God on earth, but if God chose rather to have them

[1] W. T. A. Barber, *The Morning of Life*, 66.

serve Him in Heaven, I have nothing to object against it, but His Will be done!'[1]

(2) And in another way faith administers patience by teaching us to understand and recognize the meaning of sorrows. If a wise forester wishes a tree to grow tall, he will lop the side branches that the leading stem may go straight upwards and all the energy of the plant may tend to ascending growth. So God does with us, lopping the side branches that the top may clear the surrounding underwood, and lift a broader crown nearer to heaven. So He weans us from earth; so He teaches us the vanity of worldly desires; so He brings us nearer to Himself; so He prepares us for larger gifts of His own sweet and all-sufficing love.

¶ A lapidary will take a bit of marble and cut deep into its ruddiest veins and fairest polish. Why? In order that he may inlay the cavity with gems, and fill the void with beaten gold. Thus God cuts into our hearts in order that in the empty places He may put Himself; and that for all the finite that can pass, He may give us larger measures of the Infinite which abides. Thus our faith, discerning the hand that sends, and the purpose of, the message, can accept the thing sent, and add to our self-command patience.[2]

If my vain soul needs blows and bitter losses
  To shape it for Thy crown,
Then bruise it, burn it, burden it with crosses,
  With sorrows bear it down.
Do what Thou wilt to mould me to Thy
    pleasure,
  And if I should complain,
Heap full of anguish yet another measure
  Until I smile at pain.
Send dangers—deaths! but tell me how to
    bear them;
  Enfold me in Thy care.
Send trials, tears! but give me strength to
    bear them—
  This is a Christian's prayer.[3]

[1] R. G. Dutton, *The Discipline of Life*, 73.
[2] A. Maclaren.
[3] Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Godliness.

2 Pet. i. 6.—'And to patience godliness.'

Godliness is godlikeness, having the same mind in us that was in Christ Jesus, viewing everything from the Divine standpoint, and living our soul's life as fully in the light of His presence as we live our bodily life in the light of the sun. Exercising ourselves unto this godliness, our patience will have a Divine quality of strength and beauty imparted to it such as no mere natural patience possesses. We rely upon the unfailing mercy and unchanging faithfulness of God; and therefore we may well be patient and endure the ills of life, when we have the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.

1. Godliness is the heart-beat of the new creature. Like the circulation of the blood in the body, which is a hidden thing, and yet fundamental to all its functions and motions, so is godliness the hidden circulation of the Divine in the human spirit. It is much more than obedience. Obedience is the fruit of which godliness is the ground. It is more than a covenant between God and man. By faith the creature stands in a covenant relation with God. But godliness is the harmony of the Divine and the human will. What friendship is between man and man, that godliness is between man and God. Friendship not only knows and reveres its object, but finds heart-rest in the presence of its object.

2. All the springs of godliness are in God. It is godlikeness; and therefore it is freedom with God. Between bosom friends cold ceremony is dispensed with. Whatever they are with others, with each other they are simple, they are natural, they are at home, they speak out of their hearts and they speak all their hearts. And such is godliness. The man who is conscious of the truthfulness of his relation to God disdains to assume anything before Him. He knows nothing of bondage, or guile, in the presence

of His God. What he is, he appears: what he feels, he speaks. As the wild-bird in the forest, as the lamb in the meadow, as the child with his father, so is he with his God. But as Nature knows nothing about leaping by a single step from the crude buds of spring to the ripe fruits of autumn, neither can the soul by a sudden transition pass from young faith to mellow godliness. It is a slow growth. But 'to patient faith the prize is sure.' Let us not grow weary in well-doing, and in due time we shall come to the sunny maturity of our life in God.

¶ The Hebrews had a dislike for abstract terms. Their profoundest thoughts on religion were vivid pictures. They did not speak of cultivating godliness, or of deepening spiritual life, but of walking before God. To live in the realized presence of God, to order their thoughts and acts so as to harmonize with His character, to rejoice in His company, to look up to Him with a smile of loving recognition in the work and warfare of life—this was to walk before God. It was the Psalmist's ideal to set the Lord always before him, to walk in the light of His countenance; Micah's, to walk humbly with his God. It was Milton's ideal to live ever in the Taskmaster's eye; Brother Lawrence's, to practise the presence of God.[1]

3. The place of godliness is in the middle. All the excellences which precede are of the sterner, the more severe and self-regarding kind, and those which follow are of the gentler sort. Before it stand strength, discrimination, self-control, patience, all having reference to myself alone, and mainly to the difficulties and antagonisms which I meet with in life. There follow it 'brotherly kindness and charity,' having reference to others, and being gentle and sweet. It is as in some Alpine range, where the side that faces the north presents rugged cliffs and sparse vegetation and close-knit strength to breast the tempest and to live amidst the snows, whilst the southern side has gentler slopes and a more fertile soil, a richer vegetation and a sunnier sky. So here, on the one side, you have these severe and self-regarding graces fronting a world full of antagonism and evil; and on the other side you have the gentler graces fronting a world full of men that need care and help. Above them all towers the great summit that points to the stars and gleams up amidst the blue. In the beginning, faith; at the end, love; in the centre, godliness—which will blend into one harmonious whole the virtues of strength and of gentleness, even as the type and example of both are found in the Christ of whom long ago it was said: 'He shall come with a strong hand; . . . he shall carry the lambs in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.' Put godliness in the middle; let that be the centre, and from it will flow on the one side all needful self-discipline and tutoring, and on the other all wise and Christlike regard to the wants and sorrows of the men around us.[1]

It is not Heaven alone,
  Which godliness attains;
It makes as much its own
  The best of worldly gains:
Since out of all on earth it draws
The ore which of its worth is cause.

From godliness there flows
  A current of content:
And ill to blessing grows,
  By thought of blessing meant:
Each lot as sent by God it holds;
And each a bounty straight unfolds.

It keeps the mind from wrong,
  And so of peace secure;
It keeps the body strong,
  Because it keeps it pure:
And hath enough, on which to wait
The heirship of a large estate.

And thus a double bliss
  To godliness pertains:
The world which present is,
  And that to come it gains:
The earthly good is Heaven's begun;
The promise rolls the two in one.[2]

[1] J. Strachan, *Hebrew Ideals*, I., 98.

[1] A. Maclaren.
[2] Lord Kinloch.

Brotherly Kindness.

2 Pet. i. 7.—'And to godliness brotherly kindness.'

A CHANGE is made here in the Revised Version. For 'brotherly kindness' it substitutes 'love of the brethren.' The change is not very happy, for the Greek is one word, and it is a word which we have adopted into English, although only as a proper name. It is the word 'philadelphia.' Perhaps brotherly-love is the best translation. But the Revisers desired to show clearly that what is meant is the love of one 'Christian' brother to another. It is fulfilling the new commandment—'that ye should love one another.' The word is all but a coinage of Christianity, and the thing is entirely and purely so. Try to throw yourself back for a moment in imagination to the state of society in the old world when the gospel appeared, and to realize the profound gulfs 'deep almost as life,' that divided men from one another—the hostilities of race, of religion, the diversities of condition, and even the separation of sex, which ought to be the foundation of the deepest unity. What communion had Jew with Gentile? What communion had bond with free? What real communion had men with women? But over this world, thus split up into opposing sections, there came the breath of a strange new uniting power. The gospel bridged over all the divisions, and filled up all the gaps, and brought bond and free, Jew and Gentile, man and woman, into a great unity, so deep, so sweet, so real, that all antagonism faded and vanished. A miracle, as the old world felt it to be, was wrought, and 'the mystery hid from ages and generations' was revealed—that a common relation to a Divine Father made all the men who partook of it one. And so this all but new word 'brotherly-love' sprang into being, to express the new relationship which had taken the place of the tragic separations and distinctions of a chaotic world.

1. So, first of all, it means a new relationship to God. It points to a common fatherhood; or, to put it into other words, the reason why Christian men and women are bound to cherish certain kindly sentiments and emotions to one another is because they partake of a common life which has been derived from one source. We go deep down into the very heart of Christianity when we talk about all Christians being 'brethren.' It is not a mere sentimental expression to convey the idea that they ought to love one another. It is a declaration of the deep reason *why* they ought thus to love one another. And it links on to that great truth, the centre truth of the gospel, that in Jesus Christ all that love and trust Him receive direct from God a real communication of a new and supernatural spiritual life, which makes them no more merely sons of God by creation and after the flesh, but sons of God through the spirit. And because we are thus 'born again, not of corruptible but of incorruptible seed, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever,' therefore are we all, as partakers of this life derived from the one Father, in the simplest and most prosaic sense of the word, 'brethren one of another.' On that basis and on that alone can be built the great truth of the unity of God's Church, or the practice of the graces that flow from such a relationship.

2. Must we, then, have faith, and virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and patience, and godliness, before we can show forth the heavenly grace of brotherly-love? Even so. And therefore there is so little brotherly-love in the Church. We can pray solemnly and do great works, we can teach and contend for the faith, we can give generously and show great zeal for God, we can control our passions and suffer patiently, sooner than we can love each other with pure hearts and fervently. Love to our fellow-members for the Lord's sake and their own sakes is not to be met with every day. It is something added even to godliness; for it is easier for the soul to move freely towards God than towards His erring children. But God will not endorse our godliness until it gives proof of itself in unfeigned love to the brethren. Every sincere

and loving child of God must become a sincere and loving brother.

¶ When, as a Christian Church, we cultivate a spirit of mutual trustfulness; when each esteems other better than himself; when the strong delight to recover and support the weak; when the wise are patient and gentle towards those of fewer attainments; when we are careful of each other's reputation, and gentle towards one another's infirmities; when we are pitiful, long-suffering, condescending, unsuspicious, and self-sacrificing, then will men remember that it is written, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.'[1]

3. Brotherly-love is not love of those who belong to us. To love our fellow-Christians because they are like us, or because they agree with us, is but self-love, not brotherly-love. Very little brotherly-love is possible in a divided Church. We must be careful, therefore, that the divisions of Christendom have not a place in our heart. If our affections are subject to the limits of our creed, or of our own denomination, or of any human compact, it will happen that we shall exclude from our sympathy many true brethren of Christ. Brotherly-love does not consist in loving those who follow with us and in disliking those who follow not with us. Brotherly-love is love to men because they are Christ's. If we desire to bring anyone into bondage to our views, or to our forms of worship, or methods of labour, it shows that our own spirit, rather than the Spirit of Christ, is Lord over us. 'Who art thou that judgest thy brother?' His Lord and thy Lord requires thee not to judge him, but to love him. If he has less freedom than thou hast, love him; if he has greater, love him; if he is a strong brother, love him; if he is a weak brother, love him. Love will work no ill to him. The difference between thee and him may be as great as that between Romanist and Quaker, but perhaps he adheres to thy Lord quite as much as thou dost. Beware that thou judge him not. Love him. Brotherly-love should unite East and West; for the same sun which rises in the East visits also the West. In the morning the East has more light, in the evening the West has more. At noon-day, East and West are equal. It remains yet for brotherly-love to bring about the noon-day of the Church.

Between the Low Mass and the High,
Between the Altar and my cell,
I met Christ and passed Him by,
And now I go in fear of Hell.

My dying brother Ninian
Confessed himself to me and said:
'I find the Christ in every man,
But how comes He in wine and bread?'

I cursed my brother as he died,
'Absolvo' I would not repeat,
I bare away the Crucified,
I would not sign his breast and feet.

I lifted Christ above my head,
I kneeled to Him, I bare Him up,
And Christ cried to me from the bread,
Christ cried upon me from the cup:

'What is this bitter sin of thine,
So little to have understood, . . .
To find Me in the bread and wine
And find me not in flesh and blood?

Go, say thy Mass for Ninian,
That, when he comes to Heaven, maybe
His prayer shall save thee, righteous man . . .
If he can find the Christ in thee!'[1]

Charity.

2 Pet. i. 7.—'And to brotherly kindness charity.'

THE 'charity' of the New Testament is simply love. The history of the narrowing of the meaning of that word from love to alms or lenient judgment is a very significant one. It shows us how hard it is for the popular mind to live in the region of lofty ideas and emotions; and how the conception was narrowed, darkened, vulgarized, and the word therefore emptied of its loftiest and noblest meaning.

[1] Joseph Parker.

[1] D. L. Sayers, *Catholic Tales*, 32.

1. What is the difference between 'love of the brethren' and 'love,' between 'brotherly-kindness' and 'charity'? The first is the love that the believer entertains for his fellow-believers, the spiritual affection that the Christian should have for the Christian; the second is the love that a man cherishes for humanity at large, the catholic large-heartedness that embraces every human being in the scope of its goodwill, and that counts no one too mean to be considered, too debased to be raised. The distinction is something like that between the special affection that one feels for one's home and the more general affection that one feels for one's country. These two are not in any sense incompatible; they are complementary, and neither would be perfect without the other. No one is less loyal to his home because he is loyal to his country; nor need a man's patriotism suffer by his devotion to his family. Similarly, a Christian's 'love of the brotherhood' does not make him less concerned about those outside the community of believers; it rather enlarges his heart towards the world beyond. And his very experience of the fellowship of Christian faith and hope makes him look with more sympathetic eye on those who have not yet passed within the circle of its illumination and joy.

2. There is a sense in which love is greater than brotherly-love. Brotherly-love is a restrictive grace; love is boundless. God has set us an example of loving men not because they are good, but because, being evil, they the more need our love. Brotherly-love is the natural affection of the new nature; but 'the great love wherewith God loved us even when we were dead in sins' is the Divine triumph of Divine love. And Christians are exhorted over and above all things to put on this love, that they may be perfect as their Father in Heaven is perfect.

There is no pause to loving,
  None in the realm of God,
For His heart is white with an infinite
    light,
  And His hope is boundless broad.
There is no pause to loving;
  Thou canst not rest with the good,
For the mighty breath that has vanquished
    death
  Is larger than brotherhood.

There is a limit to friendship;
  Heart must respond to heart,
And the soul must wait at a kindred gate
  To receive its other part.

But love flies further than friendship;
  It waits not the kindred tie,
It measures its speed by human need,
  It is drawn by the sound of a cry.

If I am cold and sapless,
  If I am leafless and dead,
Love as much is bound to the barren ground
  As if there were blossoms spread.

If I break the box of ointment,
  If I cast its fragrance away,
Love must follow the track to bring me back,
  And hope every hour of the day.

I ought to bend to the lowest—
  I ought, and therefore I can;
I was made to the end that I might descend
  On the steps of the Son of man.[1]

3. Now see how the first and the last graces meet together. Faith and love make one as the foundation and head-stone of a building, or as seed-time and harvest. As the seed sown develops and develops until the broad acres wave in golden glory, even so faith develops into the eternal reign of love. Love is the glorious crown of a glorious character. Love gives sterling value to all the graces. Without love they are nothing worth. Faith avails nothing, knowledge avails nothing, virtue avails nothing, heroic patience avails nothing, self-sacrifice avails nothing, if love be not the soul and spring of all.

4. And then see how the middle grace goes out to this grace and makes it possible. To godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. We have here two concen-

[1] G. Matheson, *Sacred Songs*, 9.

tric circles, and in order to describe either of them, the one foot of the compass must be fixed in that centre, and both the brotherly-kindness and the wider charity must follow as consequences of the godliness. Practically that is clear enough. Men say, 'All that you have been telling us is very beautiful, but it is all a dream.' As the greedy Scottish barons said to John Knox when he wanted to found a national system of education with the church revenues—'It is a devout imagination.' Yes; it is a devout imagination, and it will always hang in the blue, a Utopia, with no relation to the world of misery and of selfishness down below, unless we follow the sequence and begin with godliness, and so get on to charity. For there is only one thing that can conquer the selfishness which is the great enemy of this universal charity, and that is that the love of God, poured into man's heart, shall on its bright waves float out the self-regard, which is central and deep almost as life itself. As long as a man is his own centre, all other men are his antagonists. So soon as his centre becomes God, he comes into relationship more or less loving with all men. Godliness is the only power which will conquer the else omnipotent power that hinders us from following such a precept as this. That is why all philanthropies which have talked about Brotherhood and have not talked about Fatherhood have broken down. From the days of Robespierre to this day the experience has been the same, and it always will be the same. Godliness conquers selfishness. Godliness gives the one true foundation for this universal benevolence, namely, the common relation to the Father, God. Godliness gives the mightiest motive for it, namely, my own participation in the love which my own participation in it teaches me must be equally meant for the blessing of the world. And godliness gives the one power by which this universal charity may be realized, namely, the indwelling, in my poor self-centred heart, of that Divine Love Himself.

¶ But still, the main lesson which Sister Dora's lady-pupils carried away from Walsall was not how to dress wounds or how to bandage, or even how to manage a hospital on the most popular as well as the most economical method, but rather the mighty results which the motive-power of love towards God, and for His sake towards mankind, might enable one single woman to effect. Sister Dora said to a friend who was engaging a servant for the hospital, 'Tell her this is not an ordinary house, or even hospital; I want her to understand that all who serve here, in whatever capacity, ought to have one rule, *love for God,* and then I need not say love for their work. I wish we could use, and really mean, the word *Maison-Dieu.*' [1]

The Law of Help.

2 Pet. i. 8.—'If these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful.'

'THESE things' are the seven graces just spoken of. Now these seven Christian graces are not strung together at random; on the contrary they dovetail into each other, the influence of each being felt on all the others; and if one were wanting the unity would be broken and the symmetry destroyed. If one of the seven prismatic colours were wanting there would be no glorious rainbow arching the heavens. If one wheel were missing from the mechanism of the watch there would be no measuring of the moments as they pass.

And so were one of these seven ingredients wanting in the life of the Christian, his character would be deformed; his conduct would present a mass of inconsistencies; and we should fail to behold the doctrine of God adorned in all things by a walk and conversation becoming the gospel of Christ. Then give all diligence; use all earnestness to have in your faith a supply of virtue, and in virtue knowledge, and in knowledge temperance, and in temperance patience, and in patience godliness, and in godliness love of the brethren, and in love of the brethren love to all mankind.

¶ In Ruskin's great work, *Modern Painters,* he devotes one chapter to what he calls 'The Law of Help.' And here is the paragraph in which he defines the law: 'In true composition, everything not only helps everything else

[1] M. Lonsdale, *Sister Dora,* 102.

a *little*, but helps with its utmost power. Every atom is in full energy, and *all* that energy is kind. Not a line, nor spark of colour, but is doing its very best, and that best is aid.' It is even so in the composition of character. Every addition I make to my character adds to the general enrichment. The principle has its reverse application. To withdraw a single grace is to impoverish every element in the religious life. 'For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, is become guilty of all.' We cannot poison the blood in one limb without endangering the entire circulation.[1]

There are four encouragements to the cultivation of these seven graces.

1. The first is mentioned in the eighth verse: 'If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Or more clearly in the Revised Version, 'If these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' This is just a repetition of the truth taught by Christ Himself when He said, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God' (John vii. 17). Do and you will know. Some think if they knew more they would do better. But the reverse is true. If we did better we should know more—more about Christ and His salvation. It is only the man whose mind and heart are bent in the direction of serving God who will have any real desire to know Him.

(1) It must be understood, however, that by 'the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ' is meant not merely a knowledge of doctrines concerning Him, but an experimental acquaintance with Him in His power to save, to strengthen, to keep and to comfort. And it is in this knowledge that progress can alone be made by the cultivation of the all-round obedience of these seven blending graces. A man who is led by his own depraved appetites or absorbed in selfish pursuits cannot, owing to the bent of his mind, make progress in apprehending the wonders of Christ's redemption and in knowing the power of His resurrection life. Christianity is not a theory but a life. It is Christ living in the soul. As St. Paul said, 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

(2) But in order to the realization of the result here described these graces must not merely be in us in an elemental condition; they must abound. 'If these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' There is life, and life 'more abundant.' There is character of 'wood, hay, and stubble'; and there is character of 'gold, silver, and precious stones' (1 Cor. iii. 12). There is childhood in Christ, and there is full-grown manhood. And it is to the abounding, golden-graced, and fully developed Christian life that there comes the deep, joyous, soul-satisfying experience of Christ and His salvation.

¶ In the part of New England where I spend my summer holidays I have seen a parable of nature which sets forth this point. It is an example of natural grafting. Two little saplings grew side by side. Through the action of the wind they crossed each other. By and by the bark of each became wounded and the sap began to mingle until, in some still day, they became united together. This process went on more and more, and by and by they were firmly compacted. Then the stronger began to absorb the life of the weaker. It grew larger and larger, while the other grew smaller and smaller, withering and declining till it finally dropped away and disappeared. And now there are two trunks at the bottom and only one at the top. Death has taken away the one; life has triumphed in the other.

There was a time when you and Jesus Christ met. The wounds of your penitent heart began to knit up with the wounds of His broken heart, and you were united to Christ. Where are you now? Are the two lives running parallel, or has the word been accomplished in you, 'He must increase, but I must decrease'? Has that old life been growing less and less and less?[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett, *The Epistles of St. Peter*, 232.

[1] *A. J. Gordon, D.D.*, 285.

2. A second encouragement is given in the ninth verse: 'He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.' A Christian deficient in the graces of the Christian character is near-sighted. He is comparatively blind. He has no clear view of his interest in Christ, and of his hope for the future. He cannot look back to the time when he first consciously trusted in Christ and realized that for His sake all his sins were forgiven, and when his heart was full of gladness. And when he looks towards the future he cannot see the land that is very far off and the King in His beauty, and rejoice that that land is his. He has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins because these have still such a hold on his nature. He has a little light in his soul, but it is only a glimmering. He is, it may be, a Christian, but a dull, cheerless, desponding Christian.

That is the encouragement stated negatively. Stated positively, it is that the Christian, abounding in the blending harmonies of the Christian character, still enjoys the sense of that forgiveness which became his when first he trusted Christ as his Saviour, and when Christ said to him in the promise of the gospel, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' And he is able to look into the future without fear. He can from day to day enjoy Pisgah views of the promised land and have in his heart the assured confidence that one day he shall walk the golden streets of the New Jerusalem.

¶ A man whose youth and early manhood had been spent in evil ways, and who was converted through the instrumentality of the Mission, was giving his testimony one night. He had met an old drinking pal during the week who had chaffed him for turning pious: 'I'll tell you what I said to him. "Bill," I says, "you know what I am"'—he was a lamplighter—'"when I goes round turning out the lights, I looks back, and all the road over which I've been walking is all blackness, and that's what my past life is like. I looks on in front and there's a long row of twinkling lights to guide me, and that's what the future is since I found Jesus." "Yes," says my friend, "but by and by you get to the last light and turn it out, and where are you then?" "Then?" says I, "why when the last lamp goes out it's the dawn and there ain't no need for lamps when the morning comes."'[1]

3. But there is another encouragement to use all diligence in perfecting this train of Christian graces. It is that by so doing we shall be making our calling and election sure. 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things ye shall never stumble' (verse 10). It is here implied that stumbling Christians are never assured Christians. If we would have the assurance of our salvation the work of salvation must be going forward day by day in our character and conduct; we must be living the consecrated life; we must, in a word, have our fruit unto holiness. There can be no assurance of pardon and heaven when there is ever and anon a falling into sin, or when there is a gradual backsliding, or when the life is full of inconsistencies. In such circumstances there must not only be doubts and misgivings, but there ought to be positive fears that we are strangers to grace and to God. How, then, is this assurance to be obtained? Our text tells us. It is by giving diligence to increase in our faith virtue, and in virtue knowledge, and in knowledge temperance, and in temperance patience, and in patience godliness, and in godliness brotherly-kindness, and in brotherly-kindness love.

4. But to crown all, give diligence to excel in these seven blending graces of the Christian character, 'for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ will get an entrance into the eternal kingdom, but every believer will not get an abundant entrance. Many a ship gets into port which does not enter under full sail, canvas filled with favouring breezes, top-mast flag unfurled, and music playing. Many a vessel enters harbour dismasted and almost sinking.

¶ The Apostle had probably before his mind

[1] *Collier of Manchester*, 94.

the spectacle of a triumph given to some Roman general who had performed a signal service to the State. On such an occasion all the citizens went forth to meet him. The gates of the city were flung open to receive him. Music resounded on every side. And the hero, having a crown held above his head, was drawn inside the city on a triumphal car. And so the Apostle seems to say that the Christian warrior's entrance into heaven will be a grand triumph. Angels will descend to bear him on high to the throne prepared for him. All heaven will rejoice. The gates of glory will be flung wide to receive him, and his will be a place near the throne of the Eternal, where he will shine as a star for ever and ever.[1]

Blindness.

2 Pet. i. 9. 'He that lacketh these things is blind.'

What things are these? They have just been given—faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity. Wherever these virtues exist in their integrity, the whole field of a man's nature has been brought under cultivation, and the man has become fruitful in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherever these things are wanting, the man, in spite of his elementary faith, is blind. He cannot discern the far-reaching purpose and significance of the grace that has begun to work within him.

1. Now an indistinct vision may result from one of two causes: a fault in the eye, or an obstruction in the atmosphere. If you cannot make out a distant object while other people can, they will say to you, 'How short-sighted you are!' but if no one can discern it, the probability is that something external has made vision impossible. In the things of God, it is almost always the first defect that mars our perception; and the main reason why 'eye hath not seen' is in our own nature, and not because God has not prepared or revealed such things for our perception. To them that love Him, He reveals; wherefore let us add to kindness love, and we shall know. There are many things to which we are blind, because we have not practised ourselves in looking for them, nor do we know in what direction to look.

¶ I remember, when in the Isle of Arran, watching through a mist for the coming of the steamer from Glasgow, our landlady found it long before we could detect it, because she was more used to the quest; her eyes were keener, and she knew the direction in which to look. And the soul that ardently believes and hopes, knows well how to lift up its eyes to the hills from whence its help shall come, and to discern the help when it appears.[1]

2. There are some people who seem ignorant of the fact that God has given them spiritual faculties suited to the observation of spiritual realities. They are like people who, if they were put down ten miles from home on a clear night, would never be able to tell you on which side of the sky the sun would rise, because they never exercised their powers in the observation of the way the skies go round. And not only may we discern spiritual realities, but more than that, it is written that the pure in heart shall see God. For God has not given up revealing Himself to men yet; but this is an age in which, while there are many who know Him a little, there are few who know Him much. He spake to the fathers. He is speaking still. Enoch was not the last of whom it should be said, 'He walked with God, he pleased God'; Isaiah not the only one who could say, 'I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up'; St. Paul not the only one who should be privileged with rapture to the third heaven; George Fox not the only one to whom it was given to say, 'I was come up, through the flaming sword, into the Paradise of God.' Many there are who have known 'the Most High God no vision, nor that One who rose again.'

God, who at sundry times in manners many
Spake to the fathers and is speaking still,
Eager to find if ever or if any
Souls will obey and hearken to His will;—

[1] J. McIlveen.

[1] J. Rendel Harris, *Memoranda Sacra*, 79.

Who that one moment has the least descried
him,
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,
Doth not despise all excellence beside him,
Pleasures and powers that are not and that
are,—

Aye, amid all men bear himself thereafter
Smit with a solemn and a sweet surprise,
Dumb to their scorn and turning on their
laughter
Only the dominance of earnest eyes?—

Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt him nor deny;
Yea with one voice, O world, tho' thou
deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.[1]

Yes! things that were seen of old may be seen again, voices that spake to prophets and seers be revived in the innermost soul of God's faithful children. God is not dead. The Lord Jesus has not been raised from the grave to be placed in an inaccessible limbo, far from the sight of believing eyes. The Holy Spirit still speaks, as of old time, by holy men; He has not left the world yet, He dwelleth with you, He shall be in you.

¶ Suppose I were to say to you that if you were to go down to Hastings you would be able to see the French coast clearly and distinctly, you would say, 'Impossible, even to the longest-sighted person; it is more than fifty miles away'; and yet as you may see in the Philosophical Transactions for 1798, the coast of France was so visible, without a telescope, from Calais to St. Vallery, with the fishing boats, and the colour of the houses clearly perceived. When you hear this you say, 'Well, if it is in the Philosophical Transactions, it must be true, and if it happened once, it may happen again.' Good enough reasoning; and the Scriptures are the Spiritual Transactions, the record of God's dealings with and revealings to men of old time. If they are true, He has unveiled the hidden mysteries not once or twice to waiting souls; and what He has done, He not only may do again, but will do, wherever He finds a truly humble heart in which to work and rest. If He stood by Paul, saying, 'Fear not,' just as really, and maybe as evidently, will He stand by you. If He guided him in his work, restraining him from preaching here, and calling him to service there, He will give you also leadings just as certain and maybe as distinct. But do you say, 'Are we then to seek for signs and wonders, to fast and pray, ardently longing for the Divine revelation, until the vision dawns?' I do not say so; but rather 'add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall, and an entrance shall be abundantly ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.'[1]

[1] F. W. H. Myers.

Diligence.

2 Pet. i. 10.—'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.'

1. We must be diligent to cast out the evil things that we find in ourselves. Roots of bitterness springing up trouble us, and it is not easy to get rid of them. The Canadian thistle is said to be one of the direst plagues with which the settler has to contend. It seems impossible to extirpate it. It is well nigh proof against the most desperate efforts of the husbandman; fire, poison, and the knife have only a temporary effect upon its vitality. No scythe, or hoe, or plough can destroy it. Dug up, burnt up, strewn with salt, treated with aquafortis, covered with lime, it springs, blooms, and seeds anew. Nothing remains but to blow it up with dynamite. The roots of bitterness in our nature are at least equally tenacious. Our faults are so deep and inveterate that we must bend our whole strength to the task of their elimination.

2. We must give diligence to bring into our life all good and beautiful things. The writer of this passage enjoins us to add one virtue to another until we possess and display

[1] J. Rendel Harris, *Memoranda Sacra*, 83.

them in full completeness and beauty. It is not enough to cultivate isolated patches of life, to raise this grace or that; we must bring in every perfection and beautify the whole range of character and action. Most gardeners are content when their grounds include only a few floral specimens of earth's many types and climes; if they can produce a fair show with these, they are satisfied. It is quite different, however, with the national gardens at Kew; there the aim is not to possess even a profusion of floral treasure but to make the grounds and conservatories widely representative, comprehending as far as possible every shrub, tree, and flower that grows upon the face of the earth. The object kept steadily in view by the authorities is to afford the student an opportunity to study a specimen of the infinite vegetation that comes between alpine mosses and the orchids of the tropics, between the hyssop on the wall and the cedars of Lebanon. The ideal of the Kew gardens must be the ideal of the Christian life. Too often the Christian is content with some graces of character and life, whilst the New Testament demands every moral and spiritual perfection. 'Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly-kindness; and to brotherly-kindness charity.' The paradises of God bear all manner of precious fruit, and if our heart and life are to be in any worthy sense the King's gardens we shall need to give all diligence.

3. Having brought all good things into our life, it is only by diligence that we keep them there. 'If ye do these things, ye shall never fall'—indicating the tendency and peril of our nature. Constant diligence and culture alone can hold the heights we have scaled, the fields we have won, the ground we have reclaimed. Neglect a beautiful garden for a while, and savage Nature forthwith avenges herself and spoils your paradise. Nettles and chickweed smother the delicate plants; brambles annihilate the dainty shrubs; the glowing roses die, and the wild stems on which they were grafted triumph; the fountain becomes a slimy marsh full of frogs and newts; the walks are grass-grown, and the lawns choked with foreign weeds. As a French naturalist points out, 'There is in nature a terrible reaction against man; if we put our hand into our bosom, the garden is in revolt.' It is the same with human nature. Slowly and painfully is our life subdued to orderliness, purity, and beauty; but it instantly springs back if we relax our vigilance. We need all diligence to cast out of our breast the bitter root, the wild grape, the poisoned gourd; then, having brought good things into our life, we need all diligence to convert them into perfect things; and then our utmost diligence is taxed to preserve our fair inheritance from degeneration, from the locust, the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm.[1]

Election.

2 Pet. i. 10.—'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.'

THERE are some texts in the Bible over which we puzzle and perplex ourselves, much to the hurt of our minds, and perhaps for the sole reason that we have not been warned about them. Of course, the texts are not noxious in themselves, but the perplexity of mind into which we are brought by their application to our own case is the hurtful thing. Some, for instance, have become insane by brooding over the possibility of their having committed the unpardonable sin, and many others, having too strong a grip on themselves to yield to despair, have suffered from occasional misgivings. The matter of calling and election is another of those Bible subjects which have power to paralyze with fear the children of God.

¶ I spoke chiefly on 'make your calling and election sure'—a blessed contradiction—the idea of making election sure, when the election was made from all eternity! I spoke plainly on the difficulties of election; said it was above reason and, one would say, contrary to reason, yet God said it, and He is holy, and we must

[1] W. L. Watkinson, *Studies in Christian Character Work and Experience*, i. 131f.

believe and trust Him. Forenoon and afternoon I tried to make the way of salvation as plain as possible. In this month's *Century* there is a most interesting story of the escape of a number of Federal officers during the war. The end is very striking. A Colonel Rose persevered and persevered, and dug a tunnel with a chisel, a comrade standing at the far end fanning in air. The last night, when Rose thought he was outside the prison limit, he dug up, and then began to faint, turned on his back, and in his despair, for he was choking, he struck up with his hands, broke through the crust and saw a star! and heard the sentinel's voice—'Half past one and all's well.' I closed in the afternoon by telling that, and said if we only stretched out our hands to God there was the bright and morning star above us.[1]

1. Now, first of all, let us gladly admit that, when we open the Scriptures and read the beautiful words of Christ's evangel, it is its freeness and graciousness that win our hearts. The tender welcome of Jesus is addressed, not to the elect few, but to the universal heart of man; He offers rest to the weary and the heavy-laden, and flings the door of His mercy wide to all the sorrowful and dejected children of men. In His gracious declaration of the boundless love of God He shows that the sun shines upon the evil and the good, and promises that whosoever believes on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. In sending forth His disciples, also, it is the universality of the gospel, and its power to affect every human heart that receives it, which constitute at once its most startling originality and its most gracious appeal. And when we turn to the Epistles it is the same fact that confronts us—that salvation is offered fully and freely to all who seek it in sincerity, and call upon the name of the Lord. So certain and unmistakable is all this that there seems no room for further discussion.

The strange thing is, however, that we cannot rest here. When we open the pages of Scripture we find that the doctrine of election is there taught as clearly as the doctrine of free grace. Like two rivers these run side by side without losing themselves in each other. First the doctrine begins with an individual, then it widens to a family, then to a nation, then narrows down to a kingly family in that nation, then through prophets to Christ, then through Christ to Apostles, then through Apostles to a Church. All these are spoken of in Scripture as 'elect.'

2. But, in the next place, election in Scripture is always for a purpose. Why was Abraham elect? Simply because of the arbitrary will of God, who because He is Sovereign can do what He likes, and therefore despotically takes one man and lavishes blessings upon him independent of his worth, while others He discards or neglects? This is a monstrous caricature of the nature of God, and of the law we are considering. Abraham was selected so that 'all the nations of the earth might be blessed in him.' In a degenerate age he was called to come out from amongst abounding iniquity, and make a new start in the world's progress upwards towards truer conceptions of God's Holy Being, and His dealing with men. And this is true likewise of Moses, of Joshua, of the prophets, of St. Paul, and above all of Christ; they were called 'not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' This great law of selection, too, is not only applied to Christ, it is used by Him to explain the very basis of discipleship: 'Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit.'[2]

Instead, then, of declaring that God elects men, and that only the elect can be saved, the teaching of Scripture is that God selects men so that through them the work of salvation may be hastened, and the world blessed. And this law we see working in the Church to-day, as indeed it is working in all human society. For God has given some to be apostles, some teachers, some evangelists. Why? For their own personal glory? For their own personal salvation? By the mere arbitrary exercise of His will, and for no explained purpose? No! But 'for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of

[1] *Life and Letters of John Paterson Struthers*, 156.

the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' This law as thus stated needs no justification, and no apology. It is justified by universal human experience, for it is applied by man in all the complex activities of life. Whenever there is work to be done, or an end to be attained, the law of selection is brought into operation.

Here, then, election and free-grace meet. God wills all men to be saved; He selects men, chooses His instruments, for the work of salvation.

Once for the least of children of Manasses
  God had a message and a deed to do,
Wherefore the welcome that all speech surpasses
  Called him and hailed him greater than he knew;

Asked him no more, but followed him and found him,
  Filled him with valour, slung him with a sword,
Bade him go on until the tribes around him
  Mingled his name with naming of the Lord.

. . . . . .

So with the Lord: he takes and he refuses,
  Finds him ambassadors whom men deny,
Wise ones nor mighty for his saints he chooses,
  No, such as John or Gideon or I.[1]

An Abundant Entrance.

2 Pet. i. 11.—'For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

The kingdom here spoken of is that inward and spiritual kingdom which Jesus came to establish in the hearts of men. It stands for 'fulness of life,' and that now and under present conditions. The meaning of the entrance abundantly ministered is not that some 'golden gate,' in some far away heaven and in some far off future time, is to be flung wide open for our reception, but that in this world, we shall, if we will, live the largest and fullest life, a life at once of perfect obedience and of complete dominion; of perfect obedience to the Divine law, and of complete dominion over the lower nature. The 'kingdom,' in Christ's own idea of it, is a present kingdom, and we may have our 'abundant entrance' into it now.

1. There are men who never do more than touch the fringe of life's possibilities in any direction, because they are inert, without energy, without aspiration. How few seek an 'abundant entrance' into the kingdom of knowledge. The majority are content with the merest smattering, enough only to be able to sustain their part in the social small talk. They just edge themselves within the portals and see enough to say that they have seen something. Whereas others, the master minds of research, give themselves no rest until they have beaten down every barrier, scaled every height, and battered in the last gate of the very citadel of truth.

In art most young people are content with the drawing and music lessons which they receive at school, and with rising to the bare average of their circle in the production of rather lead-pencilly or milk-and-watery landscapes, or the performance of the conventional pianoforte 'piece' for the delectation or astonishment, or torture (as the case may be) of the drawingroom. There they stop. They merely peep within the gates as they stand ajar, and go no further. There is no abundant entrance into these kingdoms of attainment. But others pause not till their Divine creations and their superb technique are a nation's wonder and pride and the world's delight. In science, even among those of scientific tastes, the greater number take but a few steps, and those along paths already marked out for them; while here and there a Newton, a Faraday, a Darwin, daringly strikes out a path for himself, hunts down the secrets of Nature to their last hiding-place, and creates an epoch in the development of the human intellect, and in the conquest of mind over matter.

[1] F. W. H. Myers.

2. Now this has its reflection on the spiritual side of man's nature, in relation to the capacities of the soul and the possibilities of the higher life. Most of us timidly take a few steps and there pause, while others press boldly on and take their seats on the right hand of the throne of eternal dominion. But all are summoned to this highest achievement. The 'abundant entrance' is for no favoured few. All alike are 'called' and chosen to this dignity. It is but a question of fulfilling the conditions of attainment, the use of 'diligence' as the author of this Epistle puts it, to make our calling and election 'sure.' All cannot be creators in art, or discoverers in science, but all may become spiritual proficients. The reason why so many have so little joy and so little power in their spiritual life is because they do not use their privilege of appropriation to the full. They are like beggar children loitering around the gate of the nobleman's park, looking furtively through; ever and anon peeping to see whether anyone is coming, and then, in a sudden access of boldness, running a few steps within the enclosure and incontinently rushing back again; shyly standing aside when the great man passes, and blushing as they receive from his hands an occasional dole. Does not this represent the religion of a good many of us? A timid and mendicant 'hanging on' to the outskirts of the great domain of spiritual experience and felicity. Jesus taught us both by His word and by His example our true relation to the Kingdom. He, 'as a Son in his own house,' not only passed within the gates, but claimed the whole realm as His heritage, and entered into full possession. 'All things that the Father hath are mine.' He meant us to perform that sublime act of appropriation as well as Himself, and to live in the liberty and joy and power of it.

3. But though all are 'called' this abundance of entrance, this fullness of possession, is only for those for whom it is prepared; for those, that is to say, who through spiritual elevation and by strenuous endeavours prepare themselves for its realization. The conquest of this kingdom cannot be without effort. 'Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life.' The gate must be forced—there must be determination, resolution, prolonged and forceful endeavour. 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence.' 'All things come to him who waits,' we are fond of saying; but the achievement of high spiritual possibility is not one of those things that come to the man who simply 'waits.' In order to the abundant entrance there must be abundant exertion. Men do not merely drift to their spiritual consummations. They must conquer them. They come to them through a course, a process, a discipline, and you have the whole programme of it in the context of this verse. The writer tells us we are 'called' to these things, but he gives us to understand at the same time that we must give effect to our own call. We are 'chosen,' but we, too, must choose. He tells us, in ver. 3, that God has 'called us to glory and virtue,' that we are designed even to become 'partakers of the divine nature.' This is the infinite realm into which we are invited, nay summoned, to enter. But though the call is to Divine dignities, the struggle is within the area of the human heart. 'Yea, and for this very cause' (as we read in the Revised Version) 'adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue, knowledge, self-control,' and so forth. He runs through the whole gamut of Christian endeavour and spiritual achievement, and then says, 'If these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Then he urges the need of diligence as the one condition of ensuring the objects of our spiritual call; 'for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble; for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom.'

A man knows that there is no 'abundant entrance' for him into the kingdom of commercial success without toil, perseverance, a constant alertness to seize opportunities, perpetual and strenuous endeavour. He must transfer these qualities to his spiritual career if he would know anything of the abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom. Men would soon become bankrupt in trade if they fol-

lowed their business callings in the same fashion as that in which too many pursue spiritual aims. A man ought to be ashamed to be able to build up a business, to win a fortune, and not to be able to win in fullness his own soul. We know that nothing great can be achieved in the realms of art and science without supreme exertion, and yet we think, or we act as if we thought, and where the highest principles of our nature are concerned we can enter into the fullness of life by remaining passive and simply leaving ourselves to be wrought upon by supernatural influences, over which we have no control and with which we have nothing to do. Will wind and tide alone bear a vessel across the ocean to some desired haven, without the incessant watchfulness and active co-operation of those on board? The elemental forces are there, but the mariner must wield and apply them. No man was ever just floated on the crest of some lucky wave, wafted by some heaven-breathed gale to those spiritual regions where life is sunniest and most fruitful, fullest of power, and of joy. It is of no use merely to gaze upon your star; you must follow it. To those distant and radiant shores the divinest of voices is calling us, as to the true destiny and home of the soul; to those blissful realms our star is ever guiding us; none the less must we 'use all diligence to make our calling and election sure.' [1]

Reminding.

2 Pet. i. 12.—'I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them.'

The Apostle ardently labours to keep remembrance alert. Memory is such a child of caprice, even in purely human matters. It is in the habit of playing curious pranks. We can remember people's faces, but we forget their names. We remember a story, but we forget its date. We can repeat all the marriage relationships of the royal house, but we forget the steps of even a short argument. We can recall the unessential, and we forget the fundamental. In higher relationships our memory gives us no better service. We remember a single injury and we forget a multitude of gracious benefits. We remember material experiences and incidents, but we forget the things which most profoundly concern our peace. There is therefore surely great need for the strenuous word of the Apostle. And it is as urgent upon us as upon the men and women of his own day that we vigorously set about to exercise and sanctify the powers of our remembrance.

1. The intensity of our remembrance depends very largely upon the depth of the original impressions. Some incidents bite deep into the mind, like acid into metal; they are not printed, but graven; not written, but burned. Other impressions are like the writing upon the steamed window-panes of a railway carriage; let the outside atmosphere get a little warmer and they pass away in an hour. Now the depth of the impression is determined by the vividness of the vision. If our gaze is cursory the impression will be transient. How does all this bear upon our remembrance in the spirit? It has this most crucial bearing: our impressions are fleeting because we do not give sufficient time to receive them. The vision does not bite. What can a man know of the country of Uganda by careering through it in a railway train? What can a man know of the wealth and glory of our National Gallery if he takes the chambers at a gallop? If he is to retain a lasting and a vivid remembrance he must sit down before one of the masterpieces, and allow himself to steep in the contemplation of its glory. It is quite impossible to take a snapshot of the interior of a cathedral. If the exquisite tracery, or even the dim outline of the structure, is to be captured, it will be done as the issue of a long exposure. And so it is with the vastness of our inheritance in Christ. Our visions come from long exposures; we have got to sit down reverently and gaze upon the glory of the Lord in prolonged contemplation. We sometimes sing, 'There is life for a look at the Crucified One.' That is scarcely true if by look we mean a transient glance, a passing nod, a momentary turning of the eyes. 'There

[1] J. Halsey.

is life for a gaze,' and that life is continuous only so long as the gaze is retained. If we only glance upon the Master we shall forget the impression at the next turning of the way; the enemy will come, and will snatch away that which was sown in our hearts. The strength of our memory depends upon the depth of our impressions.

2. It is equally true that the intensity of the remembrance depends upon the studied preservation of the impressions. There are forces ever about us that minister to erasion and oblivion. Recently the workmen were engaged upon a very conspicuous monument in London, deepening the inscriptive letters which told the heroic story. The corrosives of time had been at work upon the once deep impressions, and they were being gradually effaced. And so it is with the lines in our memory; time is hostile to their retention, and is ever at work seeking their effacement. And so the impressions need to be periodically deepened and revived.

Have we any ministries for effecting this purpose? Yes, we have many.

(1) *A place can do it.*—If you go back to the little village where you spent your early days, how the old life comes back to you as you tread the accustomed ways and turn the familiar corners. How the sight of an old well can recall an experience, and even a drop upon the bucket can revive feelings which carry you back to your youth. And a place can sometimes refresh and deepen a spiritual impression. There was a little place in a garden to which Thomas Boston used to repair whenever he wanted to quicken his early love for the Lord. It was his spiritual birthplace, and the very place seemed to abound in the ministry of regeneration. It would be an amazingly fruitful thing if some of those whose spiritual fervour is growing cool, and whose early conception of the Lord is becoming faint, would spare a day to go to the place where first they knew the Lord. That sacred spot would redeepen the lines of their early covenant, and they would find themselves revived. It would be a great day in many a man's life if he would go back to the little village church, and sit for one Sunday in the seat which he occupied when there broke upon his wondering eyes the vision of the glory of his Lord. For a place can renew the lines of our remembrance.

(2) *A thing can do it.*—An apparently commonplace thing can recall a conspicuous history. The scent of a flower may unveil a day which seemed to have been buried in permanent obscurity. But the principle has higher applications still. A piece of broken bread can recall the broken body of the Lord, and a cup of wine can become the sacramental minister of the blood of the Lamb. Can we afford to neglect these helpmeets of grace? Even the superlative verities of our faith sometimes grow dim to our eyes, and we temporarily lose our hold upon them. Let us make use of every means appointed by the Lord, if perchance our memory may be revived and these fruitful sanctities may be retained.

(3) *An incident can do it.*—How frequently it happens that the hands busy themselves in doing a thing which has not been done for many years, and the little action draws the curtain back from our youth. I played a little game the other day which I had not played since boyhood, and in very literal feeling I was a boy again, and all the past environments round about my feet. And it is even so with activity of a higher kind. That bit of Christian work you dropped, and the dropping of which has brought such a heavy penalty of spiritual degeneracy and recoil—take it up again! Your Lord's grace was very real to you then! Take it up again, and you will find that in that God-blessed work your remembrance is revived, the effaced impressions have deepened again, and you have the old inspired vision of the glory of the Lord. Go to it again and your soul shall be restored. In all these ways, by a diligent determination to give ourselves time to receive our spiritual impressions, and by cherishing all the ministries by which the impressions can be preserved, it is possible to sanctify our memories and to make them temples of the living God.

3. But in this text the Apostle puts himself

forward as a helpmeet of other men's remembrances. 'I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance of these things.' It is a gracious prerogative that we can minister to one another in holy things. It is possible for one man to rouse another man's memory to the recollection of the things of the Spirit, and to revive his sense of the superlative grace and goodness of God.

But this ministry of remembrancer is one that requires the utmost delicacy if its exercise is to be hallowed and fruitful. The phrase in the text, 'to put you in remembrance,' literally signifies to remind quietly, to mention it under one's breath, to gently suggest it. There are two ways of performing the function of remembrancer. We can approach our brother like an alarm bell, or we can bear upon him like a genial breathing. We can rouse some people quite easily by drawing up the blinds and letting in the light. There is no occasion for the rattle of artillery; it is quite enough to let the sunshine in. And there are some men who seem to be spiritually slumberous, who do not require some angry indictment, but only a gentle hint of spiritual resource. Here is a man who is down; and in the depth of the depression he has forgotten everything but the calamity itself. Now here is an opportunity for the Lord's remembrancer! But how unwise it would be to come with all the clatter of a clanging, rousing bell. The only effective approach would be one of exquisite delicacy. We must approach the man as a nurse would touch a patient who is full of sores, and in tones of the softest compassion we must remind him that he is a millionaire, and that he has untold capital in the bank of the Lord. But oh, the tact of it! See that fine touch in the Apostle's ministry: 'I shall be ready always to put you in remembrance . . . though you know them.' How delicate the courtesy! It was the very inspiration of the Holy Ghost. 'It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.'[1]

[1] J. H. Jowett, *The Epistles of St. Peter*, 244ff.

The Christ of Fact.

2 Pet. i. 16.—'But we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.'

Most readers of the Gospels allow that the character of Christ is sublime, but beyond the fact of its beauty lies the question, Is it true? There are critics who contend that its sublimity was created by uncritical admirers, disciples who heightened goodness into perfection and then ascribed to their own creation the attributes of Deity. We who live in a period of great unsettlement may do well to consider why we are certain that the Gospel portrait is a fact and not a fiction.

1. In the first place, there is one thing that fiction has never done. It has never created a perfect character. There are two opposite types of human character—that which excels in gentleness and that which excels in strength. But these two opposites do not easily unite. Those who are remarkable for gentleness are usually deficient in strength, while those remarkable for strength are usually deficient in gentleness. The perfect character, therefore, is one that would combine the opposing virtues in their true proportion.

Now this is exactly what is seen in the character of Jesus Christ. If our first impression is, How gentle! our second is, How strong! If He were yet stronger, He would be hard. If He were gentler, He would be weak. His character escapes both extremes, and to say this is to recognize in Him the ideal of human perfection. Fiction presents us with nothing that equals this. There are in fiction fine characters, noble characters, characters which demand our love and our admiration, but they are every one of them imperfect. Not one of them has the smallest pretension to be without sin.

2. In the second place, remember the use which the imagination has made of the Gospel character down the centuries. Think, for example, of the Apocryphal Gospels in far off primitive days. They were invented to sat-

isfy Christian curiosity, which wanted to know more than the Gospels contained. But what were the characteristics of the Apocryphal Gospels? Christ is there far removed from the unutterable sublimity of the Evangelists—an inferior third-rate figure and personality who could never uplift any human being. There is no conscious moving power in that work of fiction. There is nothing in it to convince the world of sin. There is no revelation of inexorable rectitude blended with boundless pity. These fictions have a literary interest for the critic, but nobody in his senses would ever dream of reading these strange productions in the ears of the sin-laden, the bereaved, or the dying, as a substitute for the sayings recorded by St. Luke or St. John. And yet the writers of those legends were thoroughly well-intentioned people. They were the primitive novelists, inventing religious stories to satisfy uneducated Christian faith. But there was never a more complete demonstration of utter incapacity. Even with the Gospels before them, they could not invent one speech for Christ on a level with the record of the inimitable Four.

And when we pass from the Apocryphal legends to the great devotional writers of Christendom of a later time—those who bring Christ into their pages and make Him speak—we pass into an atmosphere very lofty, very refined, and yet beneath the level of the four Evangelists. Bonaventura, for example, in his well-known 'Life of Christ,' did an extremely daring thing. He invented a long prayer for Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. But it is no disrespect to that saint to declare that the task was entirely beyond his power. He was a very pious student of the words of Christ, but he simply could not rise to that occasion.

Think of the conversation between Christ and His mother in *Paradise Regained.* Lofty in sentiment, majestic in diction, those grand, imposing lines testify to a splendour of imagination and a genius unsurpassed; but nobody would place Milton on a level with the Evangelists. The failure of Milton is conspicuous. He reduces our Lord to a mere humanitarian figure. It is commonly agreed that Milton's Satan is far more convincing than Milton's Christ; and that estimate is true.

3. Christ has often been introduced into modern poetry and romance, but with far greater caution and reserve than in previous days. The great poets of the nineteenth century scarcely ever invent a speech for Jesus Christ. Christ is the subject of their noblest thoughts, but Christ Himself is not impersonated in their lines.

Still more significant than this is the treatment of Christ in that remarkable poem called *Christ in Hades.* The gifted author of those melodious lines follows our Lord in imagination through the realms of the departed. He tells us how the dead assemble round that wondrous Figure, keenly aware that He is not such as they; how they wait wistfully to hear Him speak; how they make pathetic and piteous appeals to Him and fall to calling Him by sweet human names. And how did He answer them? There was the poet's perplexity. With all his genius, he could not imagine what Christ would say. Now here was a magnificent opportunity to create a thrilling and glorious scene. Christ went to preach to the spirits in prison. Well, what did He say?

> He told it not, or something sealed
> The lips of that Evangelist.

Well, then, imagination has failed. The poet could not venture to do this thing: Christ in Hades is not permitted to utter one positive word; no, not one. They had gathered before Him, eager, appealing, in suspense, waiting the signal He could not give, wanting the one word that He might not speak. This Modernist Christ is no Consoler; He has no power; He cannot even say, 'Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.' He seems baffled by the needs of humanity in that underworld. A Christ who had no word of consolation, a speechless and a helpless Son of Man—can anything be less like the Christ of the Evangelists? Silent within that solemn region of the dead—that is the one thing that the Christ of the Gospels could never have

been. Why does the poet imagine a silent Christ? Because he knew not what to make Him say. And who does not sympathize? Imagination, genius, melodious power of speech: these are glorious gifts, but they cannot create what the Gospel has left untold. Before that matchless Figure imagination fails.

4. There is a fourth reflection to be made. What men in our time desire is this—not so much to know how Christ conducted Himself in the simple life of Galilee many centuries ago, but rather how Christ would behave in the complex life of to-day. Men ask to-day, What would Christ do if He were a director of a company, or a clerk in a bank, or a working man in a factory? Can we conceive how Christ might act as a leader? In answer to that such books have been written as *In His Steps* and *If Christ came to Chicago*. Would it not fairly represent the impression that such works have made to say that when we closed them we thought, 'Well, yes; probably if Christ were placed in that sort of predicament He would say something like that, or do something of that kind, but He would do it on a far sublimer level and in a perfectly inimitable way.' The social reformer who desires to transfer Jesus Christ from the first age down to this is not able to sustain our Lord at the same unearthly height as does the Gospel. And that shows how stupendous the task would be for fiction to imagine what the Perfect Man would do, to carry Him through scene after scene of daily life, to show Him in various circumstances always consistent with Himself, always inimitable, matchless in words and deeds, so that He touched nothing that He did not glorify and immortalize. And yet this, and nothing less, is what the Evangelists have done, and that is a superhuman achievement.

The Evangelists were not competent to create the Ideal which the Gospel contains. Neither they nor any of the great writers of fiction ever since could have done this thing. We are driven by force of fact to this conclusion: what the Evangelists had no power to invent they were well able to report. They were totally incompetent to create, but they could bear witness to what they had seen. And that is their own explanation: 'We did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty,' or, as another puts it, 'That which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled, concerning the word of life . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.'[1]

Advent.

2 Pet. i. 16.—'The power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

ADVENT has two meanings, which we may call for convenience the historical and the prophetic. In the first sense it commemorates the historical coming of our Lord as a man among men and the preparation for that coming. In the second, it reminds us of the great and mysterious doctrine of the Second Coming, of the conception of the glorified Christ as Judge of the world, and of all the ideas connected with the phrase 'the kingdom of God.'

1. It is obvious why, from an historical point of view, the season of Advent should be the opening of the Christian year. The birth of Christ is the first great fact in historical Christianity, and it is clearly right that the Church should set apart a season of preparation for the festival with which we celebrate that great event. If Christmas is to be something more to us than a mere swiftly passing round of gaieties and good cheer, if it is to be a real Christ's Mass, a real commemoration of the birth among men of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we must certainly prepare for it; we must attune our minds to the sacred solemnity of the festival and to its message of peace and goodwill.

Just think for one moment of the stupendous character of the fact, the mere historical fact, which it commemorates. As Christians we believe that that fact was the Incarnation

[1] W. J. Sparrow-Simpson.

of God Himself. But even to those to whom that mystery is so incomprehensible as to be either unmeaning or incredible, and who prefer to think simply of the birth of Jesus Christ, that plain historical fact, stripped of everything but what the strictest secular historical criticism allows, remains unique in the history of the human race. That obscure birth—so obscure that even now its date is a matter of dispute among the most learned historians—was the beginning of a life and work which far transcend in their results the utmost that has been accomplished by an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Napoleon, a Confucius, a Buddha, or a Muhammad. People sometimes talk lightly of the millions who profess the tenets of one or other of these three great religious leaders, as if the numbers of followers raised these religions to an equal or even a superior historical importance to that of Christianity; but no serious and unprejudiced historian regards them as comparable with Christianity as factors in the progress of the human race.

It is this fact, then, which has so profoundly modified the course of history, and which we believe is destined, through all vicissitudes of dogma, to modify it still more and more—it is this fact to which each Advent turns our attention anew. And as we ponder this stupendous fact and try to realize its significance, how it reduces to their proper proportions all the other events which make up our experience! Not that it robs our lives and our interests of their due importance. On the contrary, it gives them their due importance, throwing into relief the elements that are vital and permanent, and dwarfing into insignificance all that is petty and transient though it seemed so imposing, so exciting, so absorbing.

2. The birth of our Lord as an historical fact is the most important event in history. It is that, not only to the Christian, but to the non-Christian. But to the Christian it is a fact which differs, not in degree only, but in kind, from all other facts of history. No doubt there is a sense in which nothing that happens returns to nothingness, as if it had never been: every fact lives on in the chain of its results. And in this sense, as we have seen, the coming of our Lord is also permanent in another sense than this. 'Lo, I am with you alway,' said our Lord Himself; not in the sense—a very true and fruitful sense—in which any great teacher or any great event of past times is with us, in their results, their example, their memorials; but in the actual though mysterious, the felt though unseen, operation of the Holy Spirit. This, without in the least minimizing the historical sense—this is after all the sense in which Advent speaks most directly to the inner life, to the individual soul of each one of us. The word 'Advent' does not indted express the truth with all the fullness of its Greek original *Parousia,* which means 'presence,' 'being present.' The coming of Jesus Christ is a fact which took place more than nineteen hundred years ago, and which issued in innumerable and imperishable results. The presence of Jesus Christ is a fact which is actually the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.

¶ The one thing final about the Gospel is Jesus Christ Himself—the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. But that very verse translates Him out of the past into the present. It means that He goes on teaching His disciples now, as certainly as He taught them of old in the days of His flesh. 'All the words He ever spake, still to us He speaketh.' By His Spirit within us He is still guiding and enlightening and inspiring each willing and obedient heart. There was a little child who used to come eagerly to her father morning by morning with the same request, 'Please tell me something'; and when he asked, 'Something about what?' the child always answered, 'Something you have not told me before.' If we lived in that happy wistful expectancy, we should not miss the fresh messages and new meanings that are in store for a childlike heart—a heart which listens for the Divine Voice and makes answer, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.'[1]

[1] T. H. Darlow, *At Home in the Bible,* 289.

Eye-Witnesses.

2 Pet. i. 16.—'We . . . were eye-witnesses of his majesty.'

THE reference is, of course, to the view which the three disciples Peter, James, and John, gained of the majesty of Christ, and of things celestial, at the scene of the Transfiguration. That scene is set forth in very simple terms by the Gospel writers, but it is one that could never fade from the memory of those who were its witnesses; one not only that could never fade from memory, but that must remain for ever as a brilliant disclosure and a stimulating impulse in the experience of those who were admitted to the holy and mystic occasion.

1. In attempting to understand what must be the value of such an event to those who were its beholders, it is worth noting that to only three of the disciples was there allowed a share in the vision. It is a question if the other nine would have seen anything if they had been present; otherwise why should the nine have been refused participation in a privilege that would have been fraught to them with everlasting blessing and power? The question why Peter, James and John should have been thus exceptionally favoured is one that it is not difficult to answer; and the answer is of more than academic interest, because it involves principles that are as relevant to those living now as it was to those who were disciples then. In matters of natural prospect we can see only those things that we are visually prepared to see. An object may have a definite existence, and a definite material existence, such as the atmosphere, for example, without the eye being able to take cognizance of it. Its invisibility is not the fault of the atmosphere, but is due to optical infirmity. It is that infirmity that gives occasion for microscopes and telescopes.

Visibility depends as much on us as it does on things, and our inability to see a thing is no kind of proof that the thing is not there. As when it is written in the 119th Psalm: 'Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law'—which means that the wondrous things are in the law whether human eyes are open to them or closed to them. Or as when Elisha, in the anxieties of battle, was concerned that his terrified servant should realize the sufficiency of God's power and the abundance of the celestial resources, and prayed, saying, 'Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha'—which indicates that the sky was thronged with forces of Divine deliverance, quite independently of the ability of the young man, or of anyone else, to observe and appreciate those forces.

2. The Scriptures of the New Testament and of the Old also give to us inklings of spiritual potencies which interest us and fascinate us when we read of them, but which for some reason we are not sufficiently adventurous to be disposed to actualize in our own experience. We read the Gospel rather with the idea of curiously remarking the singular and mystic events transpiring in another continent and age of the world than with the thought of finding in those events, and in the experiences that accompanied them, a criterion of what life and experience is designed in all ages and latitudes to be. There is an exceeding absence of what we might call spiritual ambition.

¶ We are ambitious for money, for education, for clothes and jewels, for the refinements of the table and even of the arts. At the level of material things, if there is anything new to be discovered we want to discover it. If there is a North Pole we send out expeditions to find it. If there are treasures of art buried in the ruins of demolished cities and temples we organize societies and commissions for their disinterment. If there are canals in Mars and intelligent beings there that have worked at the excavations of those canals, we send down into South America an observation corps equipped for bringing the latest reports from our Martian kindred. About all such matters we are neither slow, dull nor indifferent. And it is only in the presence of a realm as real as

any of these, but not appreciable by even the most delicate material apparatus, that the human passion of research congeals into uninquisitiveness.[1]

3. If we are believers we say that our reliance is upon God. Yes, but how is our reliance upon God? Reliance may be a positive matter and have in it an impulse of effect, or it may be a mere negation and only a euphemism for slothfulness and a disposition to take things for granted. We have tracked the course of events enough to know that things of themselves do not better themselves, and we have probably discovered before this time that when the train of events is lifted upon a higher track, and taken along an upward grade, there is something involved in it besides the direct might of the Everlasting Arms.

God doubtless enters the world, but His entrance is along the line of the inspired touch that He puts upon some human soul, the celestial thrill by which He animates the spirit of some human intermediary. He tells the secrets of His own heart to some human confidant, and that confidant is able to walk forth among men with the power of a Divine vicegerent, a human finger through which God's arm puts its pressure upon men and events. And so men are taken up into the high places of the earth, shown things that eye hath not seen; told things that ear hath not heard; taken up men, and then let down angels of power and deliverance, moulders of men, shapers of events, generals of history.

4. Unless we are prepared to sacrifice the profoundest significance of both the Old and the New Testament Scriptures, we have to concede that while in all the history so recorded there may have been only one Transfiguration scene, the instances are many of celestial disclosures wherein, in one form or another, men have consciously walked upon ground that was made bright by a heavenly illumination, have consciously experienced the impulse conveyed to them by the entrance into them of suggestions borne in from Divine sources. And it is that that has constituted the certainty of their purpose and the stability of their assurance. We are taught that we walk by faith. Yes, but not by faith alone. In no range of our life's experience do we ever take anything absolutely on trust. Faith is a producing factor only according to the amount of knowledge that underlies it. It is stupid to believe except so far as we have grounds for our belief. It is in the construction of life as it is in the rearing of a building—we may project it into the air to an almost unlimited height provided we have at the bottom something which has not the tenuity of atmosphere but the solidity of rock.

And so Christ says, 'We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen,' and by that token, and only by that token, was He able to maintain a career in which there was no anxiety, no misgiving, no fluctuations of feeling or thought.

Moses could maintain himself in steadiness of demeanour and of action in the midst of all the difficulties, antagonisms and embarrassments of his captaincy of the Hebrew people, and he could maintain himself there for forty years because for forty days—one day for each year—he had tarried with God in the heights. Stability cannot be extemporized. Stability has got to have something under it to make it stable. Elijah, environed with peril, loaded with anxiety, could address King Ahab with a clarion note of ringing prophetic denunciation because he could say to him, 'As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand!' Consciously charged with the secrets of the Divine mind and purpose; consciously commissioned to an authoritative vicegerency—to Elijah the black earth was made beautiful because it lay under a white sky.

5. That, then, is for us one of the great meanings of the Transfiguration scene. Heaven and earth close together. Things visible to every eye that has light in it. The heavens not made of brass and God not a dummy. God's touch man's qualification for historic generalship. The world managed by its prophets. Every man a prophet so far as he is able to rise into an atmosphere that is pure

[1] C. H. Parkhurst.

enough for God to breathe, that is so white and still that spiritual presence becomes manifest, and the still small voice loud enough to be heard.

We, also, may go up into the mount of vision. We, also, may hear the voice saying, 'This is my beloved Son.' We are all too commonplace, too willing to live down in the mists of the valley. The mount of vision calls us. We may dream dreams and see visions, if we will. We may hear heavenly voices, if we will. We may breathe the mountain air with God, if we will.

The spell of the dawn is over, and the sun
  has begun to climb:—
But the moment is mine for ever, it lives
  and it works in my heart:
Though thy face be veiled by its splendour,
  I have seen thee, O God, as thou art.
In that thrill of wonder and glory thy mes-
  sage came from afar,
As light is flashed through the ages from
  a bright, invisible star.
With high imperial summons thy voice hath
  rung in my ears:
I go; for thy love hath called me from be-
  yond the encircling years.
I go; for thy love constrains me; I feel
  the stress of its might:
It draws me inward and upward with chains
  of ethereal light.
I have come from thee—when I know not
  —like mist from the ocean's breast;
But the mist shall feed the river, and the
  river at last find rest.
I wander afar in exile, a wave-born flake
  of foam;
But the wheel must 'come full circle,' and
  the wanderer wander home.[1]

The Lamp and the Star.

2 Pet. i. 19.—'We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.'

SUPPOSE we were setting out to climb some lonely Alpine peak, what would be the method of our advance? The first part of the journey would begin soon after midnight. Those who watched us as we went would see a string of lights moving up the mountain side, and by these glimmering lanterns we should find our way through the thick pine forest, up the steep moraine, across the glacier. Above us there would rise a dome of sky dark as velvet, and far away the white ice peaks would stand like ghostly sentinels, each hooded in his snows, silent, dreadful, immutable. But at three or four o'clock, as we gained some wide plateau of snow, a halt would be called. Through the silent air a sigh of life would rise; far away the topmost peak would grow whiter; around us the outlines of ice and rock would emerge into distinctness, and then the guides would extinguish the lamps one by one. Why? Because their use was ended; the summer dawn was near, and already on the peaks the rose of day began to burn. This is precisely the contrast which is suggested in this poetic phrase of St. Peter's lamps and the morning star—lamps and the sun: for the people that sat in darkness have seen a great light. Uncertainty is exchanged for certainty: the perilous path, half-discerned, for the safe and practicable way: the guesses of philosophy for the perfect day of Truth. The day is come, for Christ has come.

Out of the shadow of night
The world rolls into light,
It is daybreak everywhere.

1. Were all revealed religion finally proclaimed incredible, we should still owe to the Jew a debt which is incalculable. For the Jew, taught by his own political experience that from a minute and despised germ of life a great nation might be evolved; taught by his own spiritual experience that virtue and righteousness are the sole abiding realities; taught by his own intellectual experience that truth might be won and kept, and become the living soul of nations—the Jew has accomplished this imperishable, this immeasurable service to humanity: he has bid it hope. Into the darkness and mystery of the world he

[1] E. Holmes, *Sonnets and Poems*, 116.

has penetrated with a bolder step than all his fellows, and he has borne aloft a brighter lamp.

But when we begin to measure the circumference of splendour cast by that lamp, we perceive at once that it did not go very far. On some problems where light was most desired it shed but a feeble and fluctuating ray. Thus, for example, the Hebrew Scriptures as a whole say little of personal immortality. If you turn to the words of Hezekiah—one of the wisest and most pious of Jewish kings—when he is suddenly brought face to face with the unknown beyond death, you will find that that unknown holds nothing for him. He clings vehemently to life and gives his reasons thus: 'The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.' The words of Job, in spite of occasional and brief harp-notes of triumph, ring with the same accent of entire mournfulness: death is for him the place of darkness, the house of dust where the very stones are darkness, and of which the best that can be said is that there the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. There is little to choose between such passages as these and that great Assyrian hymn of death, called the Descent of Istar into Hades, which pictures the abode of the dead as:

The house of darkness
The house men enter but cannot depart from,
The road men go but cannot return,
The house from whose dwellers the light is withdrawn
The place where dust is their food, their nourishment clay.
The light they behold not: in darkness they dwell,
They are clothed like birds, all fluttering wings,
On the door and the gate posts the dust lies thick.

And so, without turning to many a passage in the Psalms and to the dreary words of the Preacher, with their unutterable despair, we see that the hopefulness of the Hebrew was far more circumscribed than we supposed. It was a lamp, not the day star, not the day; it lit the path of earthly duty with a perfect light, but it cast barely a ray into the impenetrable darkness of the shadow of death and that which lay beyond it.

The same may be said, though with some modification, about the social hopes of the Hebrew. The lamp burned bright and unextinguished for many an age, for of all things the surest thing to the Jew was that it is righteousness which ennobles a nation. He saw the vision of a perfect society—a society God-governed, God-worshipping—the perfect vehicle of the Divine will, the concrete expression of the Divine mind. But what he also found to be true at every point of his history was that he was not efficient to create and maintain such a society. He was like the artist who has the genius to prepare the scheme of a great picture, but has not the power to complete it. Thus we have only to turn to our Gospels to discover that Jewish society as Christ found it was hollow to the core. It was, as He said, in an image at once startling and dreadful, a whited sepulchre, full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Religious and moral progress had come to a standstill. The priesthood was powerful and imposing but corrupt; the leaders of the nation learned in the pedantry of learning but insincere in belief, immoral in conduct, and hypocrites in temper and practice. The lamp had shown the way, but had not led men to the height: and as the ages passed it had burned ever dimmer, till the way itself grew indistinct. It was a lamp whose light was dying in the socket—not a day star, not the pure unvanquishable dawn.

2. And now listen to the sublime and inspired speech of St. Peter; 'a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.' Do not the words lead us back at once to those green pastures where shepherds watched their flocks by night and suddenly heard a great company of the heavenly host proclaiming peace and good will to man? Is he not thinking of the Star which arose in the East, and stood still over the manger-cradle where the young child lay?

Are not these shepherds, and these wise men whose lamps hang extinguished because the glory of the Lord shone around them, types of the world's sages and prophets whose lamps of wisdom paled their ineffectual ray, because at last the day star rises, and the morning breaks? For this and no other was precisely what did happen with the coming of Christ. He came as the Light of the world, bringing with Him all the fresh hope and splendour of the morning. For man the individual, immeasurable hope—the shadow of death gone, and life and immortality brought to light by the gospel. For man collectively, that is, for society, immeasurable hope also—the old order changed and giving place to new, and the spirit of progress once more passing over the dark void, and quickening it. Man rises up and sees the peaks of God afar, the immortal summits long hidden in the night, or visible only like vague shadows in the gloom, and presses on to a destiny such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived. Society long stagnant, fixed, and immutable begins to move also, and the spirit of progress is abroad. The Roman order gives place to a Diviner order, the empire of the Cæsars to the Kingdom of God, the religion of force and terror to the religion of humanity. It was not only Christ who was born in Bethlehem—the world itself was born anew there. All history ranks itself, not by the caprice of the ecclesiastic, but by force of natural affinity, into that which came before Christ, and that which happened after. The most sceptical of historians must needs admit the classification: whatever happened in Bethlehem, this he knows, that a force was born there which transformed the world. That force was the Birth of Light; the lamps that lit the night are gone, the prophets' toil and the shepherds' vigil are fulfilled. The Day-star has risen, and behind it comes the Day streaming into the dark heart of man, illuming the way of Truth, glittering on the far off pinnacles of the city of God, filling even the pathways of the tomb with an immortal sunshine—the Day has come, for Christ has come.

And so the words take us back to Bethlehem. Dark lies the Jewish plain, dark rise the Syrian hills, hushed lie the pastures and the sheep; and on these hills, invisible, stand men of majestic presence, the great spirits of the past—Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, and that Elijah who was a burning and a shining light—they stand and wait. 'Watchman, what of the night?' But no voice answers from the sleeping pastures, and the world lies dumb. 'Watchman, what of the night? Our lamps go out, and something tells us that our long vigil is nearly done.' But none replies: the heavens are very still, and up the road to the little town of Bethlehem climb two weary pilgrims for whom there is no room in the inn. 'Watchman, what of the night?' And now behold the fugitives have reached their humble shelter, and a child's voice floats out upon the frosty air, and a whisper runs across the world—'The night is departing.' Lonely watchers, majestic prophets of the truth, depart ye also to your rest, the world is safe, for God hath entered it. He enters it in the garb of a little child. He enters it—and light enters with Him: for suddenly a great glory floods the earth, and a multitude of the heavenly host sing

> Glory to God in the highest
> And on earth peace, good will among men.

So is Christ born in Bethlehem of Judea, and from land to land there flies the news, 'The night is gone, the long expected Day has come.'[1]

> A Star came out of the East,
> And a Dream came out of the West.
> They thought that the Star would set,
> They dreamed that the Dream was best.
> The dream of an Empire Vast
> As the world's night-bordered hem,
> The Star of Eternal Love—
> They met at Bethlehem.
>
> And the Dream became a star,
> That fell through the night, and died;
> But the Star became a dream,
> Fulfilled through æons wide.[2]

[1] W. J. Dawson.
[2] B. F. Trotter.

The Lamp.

2 Pet, i. 19.—'A lamp shining in a dark place.'

'A dark place.' There rushes instantly to mind some tortuous track. It is hedged about by dense forestry; it winds and twists and forks and branches; the huge boughs overhead blot out the sky. The traveller who, with no light to shine upon his path, attempts to thread this labyrinth is in a pitiable plight indeed. He cannot see his hand before him! He stumbles over a gnarled root; he kicks against a heavy stone; he puts his foot into a hidden burrow; his face is torn by a straggling wisp of thorn. Sometimes the continuous crunching of the scrub beneath his feet tells him that he has left the track altogether. It is a dark place. It may be that St. Peter's picture suggested Dante's. Dante tells of the time when, at the age of thirty-five, he awoke to the fact that he was lost.

In the midway of this our mortal life,
I found me in a gloomy wood, astray,
Gone from the path direct: and e'en to tell
It were no easy task, how savage wild
That forest, how robust and rough its growth,
Which to remember only, my dismay
Renews, in bitterness not far from death.

1. But where is this dark place, so vividly described first by St. Peter and then by Dante? Do they mean to say that the 'world' is a dark place? And if so, is it true? Is the world a dark place? Is it not bathed in brightness? Is it not the best of all possible worlds—a world that makes you glad to be alive? Can any man look upon a field of corn all flashing with red poppies; or upon a range of snowcapped mountains piercing the blue canopy above; or upon the sun sinking to rest in a tropical sea; or upon the waves dashing themselves into spray on a rock-bound coast; and declare, in spite of all this, that he is living in a dark place? Can any man who has ever gathered wild flowers in the lane; or who has made friends with the furry creatures of the woods; or who has marked the plumage of the birds out in the forest; or who has seen a salmon glitter as it comes flashing from the stream; can any such man say that the world is a dark place? Can a man watch the children romping on the village green; or listen to the song of the nightingale; or drink in one long liquid peal of laughter; or take part in the boisterous fun by the fireside, and say that the world is a dark place? But let us jump to no hasty conclusions. Does St. Peter really say that the world is a dark place? Or does he merely affirm that the world would be a dark place if it were not for the Bible? This sure word of prophecy, he says, is like unto a lantern shining in an otherwise dark place, and, by its illumination, saving the place from its own darkness!

2. The world is not a dark place. At least, it is not a dark place for us. But it would be a very dark place for us if we had no Bible, no knowledge of God, no clear revelation of His love and care. And it is still a very dark place for those to whom these priceless blessings have not come. Take the savages, for example. Barbaric people live for the most part in climes where Nature is more prolific, more gorgeous, more luxurious, than in these temperate zones. And yet life under such conditions, so far from being a picnic, is a nightmare. The savage is surrounded by companions whom he cannot trust, and he feels himself to be at the mercy of natural forces of which he is horribly afraid. Every puff of wind that blows upon him is the breath of a demon. The air is full of hateful and malignant spirits. He knows not at what moment they may take it into their heads to destroy him. He lives in Paradise, but his Paradise is Purgatory to him. We know no such terrors. We have been taught that all these forces are under control. We have come to feel that they are governed by inscrutable wisdom, by unerring justice, by infinite love. We may or may not be decidedly Christian; but we have read our Bibles, or come under the influence of those who have. And the sacred revelation there made has banished all superstitious horrors. We are calm, restful, unafraid. The world is not dark, but delight-

ful. Yet it is delightful only because of the lantern in the lane.

3. But there is a third picture. The dawn is breaking! The day-star is in the sky! As yet, it is true, the light is dim, crepuscular, uncertain. You are glad that you have the lantern in your hand. But still the darkness has gone. The grey dawn is filtering through the branches overhead! And high above you is the Morning Star! What did St. Peter mean by this third picture? He leaves us in no uncertainty. For see! . . . 'a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts! It is the light breaking within! It is the dawn of Christian experience! In his *Horæ Subsecivæ* Dr. Brown comments on the picture of Luther in the Convent Library at Erfurt, and he lays stress on the fact that, as Luther pores over the sacred pages, the dawn comes stealing in through the windows. The young monk, he says, is gazing into the open pages of a huge Latin Testament—we can see that he is reading the opening chapters of the Romans. A few dangling links indicate that the Bible was once chained—to be read but not possessed; it is now free and his own! Next moment he will come upon—or it on him—the light from heaven, shining out from the words 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God,' and, in intimation of this, His dawn, the sweet pearly light of morning, shining in at the now open lattice, is reflected from the page upon his keen, anxious face. That is a touch of real spiritual genius. The imagery is unmistakable. The monk was reading the Bible in a dark place when, suddenly, the day dawned, and the day-star arose in his heart!

In *With Christ at Sea* Frank Bullen has a great chapter entitled 'The Dawn.' It is the story of his conversion. And he tells how, having been led to faith in Christ by those majestic and inspired words that he had heard read to him by the seamen's missionary, the whole world seemed a new place to him. The leaves seemed greener, the sky bluer, the flowers sweeter. It was 'the dawn.' To such a man the old lane is a dark place no longer! It is heaven upon earth! The dawn has broken! The day-star has arisen in his heart! His faith is fortified now by the strongest of all possible arguments—the argument of experience. The things that he has felt and known may not convince others; but they have lifted him beyond the reach of doubt.[1]

The Day Star.

2 Pet. i. 19.—'Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.'

The term 'the day star' is not used elsewhere in the New Testament, but there is a suggestion of the same idea in the Book of Revelation, where Jesus is made to say: 'I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.' From these and similar passages we can see pretty plainly what the writer is aiming at. He wants to tell his readers that faithful obedience to what God has revealed through our Lord Jesus Christ will supply them with an inward witness which will make them independent of all external testimony as to the meaning of life. Even though the whole world were to remain dark, the glory of heaven would shine within their souls, and Christ, the morning star, arise upon the firmament of their own individual consciousness of good.

1. The evangel of Jesus has come to the inhabitants of this world like a light shining in a dark place. We can see its beauty and feel its power; we must therefore give heed to it, lay hold of it by faith, join ourselves thereto. And so doing we shall find that God's eternal day will dawn within our own souls without our having to wait for death or for the passing away of this material order to give us access to it; and the day-star, the star that heralds the rising of the sun of God's righteousness upon all creation, will rise and shine in our hearts. The figure used is precisely that of the famous Pauline saying: 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

[1] F. W. Boreham, *The Uttermost Star*, 228ff.

2. Now we are all so constituted as to be able to anticipate in a measure, as it were, through faith in Christ, and through the mysteries of justification and sanctification, the glories of heaven before we come to it. Something of the very life eternal will be ours here and now. The principal value of the Christian revelation is this—that it really does put us in touch with what is beyond and above all sense experience, all change and decay, all darkness and evil. It can and does unite us to the eternal now. It puts us in possession of that which will survive when this world and everything in it has vanished like clouds and shadows before the light of the morning. By its ability to do this the gospel of Jesus stands or falls. If people only understood better what it is and what it promises they could not possibly view it with indifference. Christianity is not primarily a set of rules for good behaviour; it is not a code of conduct; it is not merely good advice as to how to live. It is an offer of deliverance from the dominion of a lie, the lie of sin. It is the infusion of a new principle into our hearts in response to faith. It is the letting through of the love of God and the joy of heaven into our earthbound souls, the shattering of the dominion of a delusion, the delusion of materiality. It is a perpetual miracle, the miracle of the impartation of God's own life to the believer through Jesus Christ our Lord. Mysterious as this sounds, it is the simple and literal truth. This is the secret of the vitality of the gospel in the world to-day as in every other day. Those who live by it come into possession ever more and more fully of something that is not of this world—a Divine essence, a spiritual good, an unspeakable gladness, which is part of the real and indestructible eternal substance from which all goodness flows.

Take an illustration.

You know the legend of the charcoal burner who dwelt in a cave in the depths of a German forest. It was a hard life that Hans lived, especially in the winter, when the days were short and the nights long and cold, and he was exposed to many dangers in his journeys for food to and from the various locations of his daily toil. It was a lonely life too, for few travellers ever came near him, and sometimes he had good reason to fear them when they did; robbers and fugitives from justice passed by his habitation occasionally and demanded shelter, nor would they have scrupled to take his life had it not been that his poverty rendered it scarcely worth while; he had nothing that they would care to carry away. When the snow lay on the ground wolves and other savage creatures would come and prowl around his door, and he had to fortify himself against them as best he could with many trunks of trees, and when they became specially menacing he would cast fire among them to frighten them away. But the illimitable forest was a never-ceasing source of wonder to simple Hans. He felt it to be mysteriously alive, partly with good spirits and partly with evil. It whispered many things in his ears as he trod its leafy glades in the summer and gazed upon its dull and bare but wonderfully beautiful interlaced boughs and branches in the winter. When the frosty rime lay glistening upon them occasionally he could almost have avowed that the dazzling radiance vaguely revealed to him the bright and beautiful world within and yet beyond the world he knew. Hans grew to be more and more sure of this and to long for a fuller vision of it. He was always looking for some means of establishing communication with it, and at last it came. One day as he sat musing in his solitary abode, with only the firelight to keep him company, a stranger entered and asked to be allowed to rest for a little time. The charcoal burner welcomed him and gave him of his best. Little passed between them in the way of speech, but Hans was conscious of a mysterious elation aroused in him by the very presence of his guest. The strange, sweet and holy effluence radiated from him that Hans had sometimes felt in the forest when it had seemed as though the veil were just about to be lifted to show him the world of his dreams. A wonderful peace and quiet settled on the rude home while the stranger was in it; it even seemed to grow larger and more beautiful; and when he rose to go he left in the hand of his host a blood-

red stone that flashed crimson rays, and then he passed out into the night. And the most remarkable thing about that stone was that when he held it he could see through the walls of his cave, through the forest itself, through and behind all ordinarily visible things, and catch a glimpse of the spiritual splendours they concealed. In time he came to be able to do this better; he even ceased to regard visible things as a barrier; he could make his way through them and dwell in the light and joy beyond, though he never knew whether he actually went away from his cave or not, for he continued his work just as before. But he was never afraid, or anxious, or troubled any more; while he kept the precious gem near his heart he was emancipated from the dreariness of his surroundings. And at length the day came when the shining jewel rose before him like a star and led him straight through the pitch darkness of his underground habitation out into the warmth and freedom of which the summer leaves had whispered and the winter frost had almost shown; but when some passing travellers afterwards knocked at his door and entered they found his body lying by the dead embers of his fire, with a look upon the face as though the soul that once tenanted it had been fully satisfied at the moment it said farewell.[1]

Inspiration.

2 Pet. i. 20.—'No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation.'

THE words are sometimes held to mean that we must not interpret Scripture privately; that is, we must not take the Word of God and wrest it to our peculiar circumstances. That is a common mishandling of Scripture which everyone knows. When men are in doubt about some action, they often seize on a text to quiet their conscience. It is possible now, as it was nineteen hundred years ago, to wrest the Scripture to our own destruction. Yet the whole tenor of the passage shows us that it was not that which was in the mind of St. Peter when he wrote, 'No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation.'

The interpretation he speaks of is not yours or mine; the interpretation he speaks of is the prophet's. The writers of Holy Scripture were not annalists; the writers of Holy Scripture were interpreters. Before them passed, as in some vision, the doings of God in providence and grace. And the prophet's work was to interpret these, and to show their meaning, and to convey their message, so that men might be built up in their faith. Now, what St. Peter teaches is that that interpretation was not in any sense the prophet's own. He looked at things, and he saw meaning in them, but it was not his own meaning that he saw. It was not natural insight that conducted him, nor any genius to discern what mattered—all that would have been a private rendering, and a private rendering is not the Scripture. No prophecy is a prophet's own interpreting. It is not given by the will of man. It is the interpretation of events by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, dwelling in men and using every faculty for the glory of God and the blessing of mankind.

Now this view of Scripture inspiration at once sets it apart in kind from inspiration of every other sort.

1. Think, first, of the inspiration of the historian. A true historian is not an annalist. He is something more than a mere chronicler. It is for him to show the connection of events and to estimate their importance by their pregnancy. If he does that feebly and confusedly, then we say he is a poor historian. If he does it in a large and illuminative way, we say he has a genius for history. Yet even when there is a genius for history, and logical power, and a grasp of facts, all that we expect in the historian is his personal interpretation of the past. That is why Robertson will treat of a period in a manner wholly different from Hume. That is why Lecky, handling the same facts, will give them a different complexion from Macaulay. They are inspired, if you care to call them so, using the word in a loose and general way, yet at their best and wisest all they give us is their private interpretation of the past.

2. Or think of the inspiration of the dram-

[1] R. J. Campbell.

atist, as we have it, for instance, in the plays of Shakespeare. We are wont to say that Shakespeare is inspired, and that in a broad sense is true. Suppose you take a play of Shakespeare—for instance, the play of Macbeth. You say that that is an inspired play. What do you mean by that? There is only one thing you can mean, if your words have any significance at all, and it is something of this kind. You mean that Shakespeare took the few facts of history that he found in the dusty pages of some chronicle and touched them with life, and covered them with beauty, and filled them with passion and reality, and this he did with his own imagination, and with all the teeming wealth of his own brain, and with all the warmth and inextinguishable passion of his own private and peculiar heart. Macbeth and Hamlet came by the will of man. They are the triumph of individual genius. Their power is contained in this, that they are the rendering of one personality. Were they less private in their interpretation they would never move us as they so profoundly do. They do not live because the facts are facts. They live because Shakespeare is Shakespeare.

3. Now, over against all that there stands the inspiration of the Scripture. Unlike all history and every drama, no prophecy is of private interpretation. When a poet is most genuinely inspired, then is he most genuinely himself. When Wordsworth is at his finest and his purest, then is he most emphatically Wordsworth. But what you are taught about Holy Scripture is that it came not by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Isaiah did not look at events, and brood upon them, and say, Now this is my interpretation of them. St. John did not look at the cross and at the grave, and say, This is how it all appears to me. They looked at everything under that light of God which is kindled only by the Holy Spirit, and looking so they saw, and seeing wrote. Mark you, we do not say that they were passive; to say that were to misinterpret everything. Probably their powers were never so alive as when they were writing a Gospel or an Epistle. All we say is, and all that Scripture says is, that what you have in the Bible is not genius; it is something different from, and something more Divine than, a private interpretation of events.

4. Are there any features in the Scripture which help to corroborate this view? No prophecy is a private rendering; the Scripture came not by the will of man. Are there any features in the Word of God which would incline us to accept that as the truth? In other words, do we find in Holy Scripture what it is almost incredible that we should find had the writers been consulting their own will? When a man is following his own bent there are certain things which he avoids. There are aspects of things which from certain standpoints may be highly and naturally uncongenial. And if you find these very aspects dwelt on and expanded and enforced, then you may reasonably conclude that something else is active besides the writer's individual will. Now that is exactly what one finds in Scripture, and finds the more one's knowledge grows. There is a certain curious want of correspondence between the message and the men who uttered it.

(1) First, note how often prophetic doctrine contradicts the bias of the will. If there is one thing clear in the prophets it is this, that the truths they uttered were often uncongenial. Now men have spoken uncongenial truths sometimes under a compelling sense of duty. When every interest urged them to be silent, their conscience has compelled them to speak out. But you can never explain that old prophetic fire by saying that it was duty which impassioned it, for duty seemed to point the other way. The call of duty is the call of loyalty. The call of duty is the call of home. The call of duty is the call of patriotism when the enemy is marching on the gate. And yet how often these old prophetic heroes lifted the voice up in the name of God, and contradicted every such call. Humanly speaking, they dared to be disloyal. Humanly speaking, they betrayed their country. Humanly speaking, they advocated courses that to the wisest seemed to lead to ruin. And if time has showed that they were not disloyal,

but the truest patriots in Israel, that only means that in their word of prophecy they were moved by a wisdom higher than their own. They crushed into the dust their private prejudices. They shattered by their speech their private hopes. They flung to the winds, when they lifted up their voice, their private interests and advantages. If the word of prophecy had come to us solely by the will of man, the Bible would have a different tale to tell. No prophecy is of private interpretation. No one who knows the prophets would dream it was. It is not thus even the bravest speaks when he is speaking at the call of conscience. This is the speaking of men who in their darkness were under the moving of some mighty power that sat enthroned above the dust of things and saw the end from the beginning.

(2) The same compulsion, as of some higher power, is seen in the portrayal of great Scripture characters. You have characters set up as an ideal, and then mysteriously that ideal is marred. The Jew had essentially a concrete mind. He loved to see all excellences embodied. He was at the heart of him a hero-worshipper, mightily influenced by old example. And that is one reason why in the Old Testament such a large place is given to biography, in the lives of Abraham and of Moses and of David Now remember that a Jewish writer never hesitated to idealize his hero. If he thought it would tell for edification, he would paint a character without a flaw,. unhesitatingly. And yet the strange thing is that in the Word of God these grand ideals which are to inspire the world are dashed with weakness, and tarnished with iniquity, and broken sometimes by the most shameful fall. There was one hero who was the friend of God—what a glorious theme for any Jewish writer! There was another after God's own heart—can you not picture how he would be described? Yet the one—Abraham—descended to mean trickery, and the other—David—fell to the very depths; and all this has been written down for us in the stern pages of the Word of God. If the Scripture had come by the will of man, you would never have had anything of that; if prophecy had been a private rendering, you would have had lives like those of the mediæval saints. And the very fact that you have falls like these in characters which were meant to lead the world is a witness to another will than ours. 'When he, the Spirit of truth, is come,' said Jesus, 'he will guide you into all truth.' It was that spirit which came upon the prophets, and led them into the darkest truth unwillingly. Not otherwise can we explain these tragic pages in writers who knew nothing of historic method, and who would never have hesitated to idealize the past for the glory of their people Israel.

(3) And then, lastly, we trace the same compulsion in the self-revelation of the writers. We trace it in David in the Fifty-first Psalm, for instance, and we have it manifestly in the Apostles. Remember that these apostolic writers were men of like passions with ourselves. They were actuated by the same desires and they knew the pressure of our common hopes. They knew, as every man must know, the desire to stand well with those who heard of them, and to hand on to coming days some not unworthy memorial of themselves. Now the point is that, being men like that, they never hesitated to reveal themselves. They wrote of their weaknesses and of their sins in the very record that told the love of Christ. They concealed nothing for the sake of fame; sheltered nothing for the sake of honour; cast no veil on an unworthy hour even in the sacred cause of friendship. Could not Peter have instructed Mark to cover up the tale of his denial? Might not John, being the friend of Peter, have dwelt a little less upon his fall? But the Scripture came not by the will of man, nor is any prophecy a private rendering, and there it all stands written to this hour. There is no hurling of contempt at Judas—a chapter like that would have been very natural. There is no golden and enhaloed picture of the men who had left everything for Jesus. John knew not what spirit Christ was of. Peter denied Him with a fisher's curses. Judas, in a profound and awful silence, goes to his own place—and that is all. That is not the moving of the will; that is the moving of the Holy Ghost. That

is the kind of thing which Scripture indicates when it says of itself it is inspired. If there be one thing growing ever clearer, as knowledge widens and the ages pass, it is that Scripture came not by the will of man.[1]

Interpretation.

2 Pet. i. 20.—'No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation.'

1. How shall we receive a prophet and understand his message when he comes? Here is the guiding word: 'No prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation.' We are not at liberty to take our own roads to the interpretation. Private ways of that sort will never lead to the truth. There is a prescribed highway by which the deep secrets of prophets can be gained. A just interpretation of prophecy will always depend upon the spirit in which we approach it. Thomas à Kempis has a very revealing word in the very first chapter of that wonderfully helpful book, *The Imitation of Christ*. 'By what Spirit any scripture was made, by that same spirit must it be interpreted.' If you want to interpret a prophecy aright you must get into the spirit in which it was born. You cannot take a private way. Only in that way, the way in which it had its birth, can you get its secret meaning.

¶ That is true of literature in general. I was reading only the other day a book by one of the ablest literary critics of the last fifty years, and he said he never understood the drive, and spring, and leap of Sir Walter Scott's *Marmion* until he declaimed it aloud on a galloping horse. But why did the secret of *Marmion* come out when it was declaimed on the back of a galloping horse? Because it was composed on the back of a galloping horse. And if you will turn to *Marmion* with this conception of the leap, and spring, and gallop in your mind and heart, you will get the very go and drive and rhythm of the poem. That will suffice for our purpose. We are to rearrange the conditions under which the poetry was born if we are to discern and interpret its meaning.[1]

2. And so it is with all prophecy, and all poetry, and all music. What is the use of bringing a commercial instinct to the interpretation of Wordsworth? What could you do with it? If you want to understand Wordsworth, you must become identified with the man, you must become possessed by the Wordsworthian mood. How then shall we find the secret of Isaiah, of Paul, of Savonarola, or of Luther? Not by any private interpretation, but by that same spirit in which their message and prophecy were born. Is not this the word of the Master? 'He that receiveth a prophet in the spirit of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward.' He that receiveth Wordsworth in the spirit of Wordsworth will enter into Wordsworth's work. He that receiveth St. Paul in the spirit of Paul will walk in the highways and byways of St. Paul's inheritance. It is no use my going to St. Paul or to Isaiah with mere implements of criticism; however delicate or however refined they may be, we shall fail to discover the secrets of his intimacy, we shall be locked out from his innermost fellowship. We must come to these men with reverence, with humility, with sincerity of purpose, with that absolute frankness which offers a sensitive surface to all good things.

To sum it all up, the Holy Spirit must interpret what the Holy Spirit first inspired, and it would be far better to have no critical apparatus at all, and to know nothing about scholarship and nothing about learning, and to come to the sacred page with the shoes from off the feet, than to go burdened with all manner of learning and scholarship, and tramp loudly and flippantly in the most sacred place. You cannot get into secrets by private and heedless ways of that kind. It will have to be done in the broad highway of God's Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit. And what we need we can get. And if ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father give the holy, interpreting Spirit to them that ask it?

[1] G. H. Morrison, *The Weaving of Glory*. 215ff.

[1] J. H. Jowett.

And so, you see, we can all be interpreters, and we can all be prophets too! For if we are all filled with the Holy Spirit there will come into our message the prophetic significance, into our very singing the prophetic fervour, into our ordinary intercourse and converse spiritual energy and pith. The Holy Spirit will speak through us.

O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
  The precious things Thou dost impart;
And wing my words, that they may reach
  The hidden depths of many a heart.

. . . . . .

O fill me with Thy fulness, Lord,
  Until my very heart o'erflow
In kindling thought and glowing word,
  Thy love to tell, Thy praise to show.[1]

The Prophets.

2 Pet. i. 21.—'No prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost' (RV).

A TRUE conception of what the Bible is must be obtained from the Bible itself. There is no reason to be afraid of going straight to the Bible; and there is no reason to be afraid of putting to it a direct question, even though it may involve something that might be called 'criticism.' Provided that we go to it with complete singleness of purpose, with a perfectly clear and open mind, not seeking merely to establish a case either on the one side or on the other, but simply to learn the truth, we shall be guilty of no irreverence, and it would be a want of faith to say that we were endangering anything sacred. Truth is not such a brittle thing that it must break in pieces as soon as it begins to be handled. Nor can we think that He who has given to us the Bible will have left His own image and superscription upon it so faint that the observant eye cannot see it.

1. What proof have we, then, that the Bible is really the Word of God, and that God's voice has really spoken to us in its pages? The clearest and simplest and most direct proof—apart from the verification supplied to it by history—is to be found in the account which the sacred writers give us of themselves. The central phenomenon of the Old Testament is prophecy. And the prophets have left us very clear statements of the relation in which they stood to the Almighty Power whose will they claimed to interpret. The leading prophets all tell us under what circumstances they came to assume their office, and how they came to regard themselves as exponents of the Divine will.

It is extraordinary how, one after another, the same features are reproduced in the prophetic books. The process is always extremely different from what it would be if the prophet arrived at his insight into spiritual things by the tentative efforts of his own genius. There is something sharp and sudden about it. He can lay his finger, so to speak, upon the moment when it came. And it always comes in the form of an overpowering force from without, against which he struggles, but in vain. Listen to this, for instance, from the opening of the Book of Jeremiah: 'Now the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee: I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak.' The tender humble spirit of Jeremiah deprecates the high commission which is being pressed upon him, but he cannot refuse it. He must needs testify at the peril of his life before kings and princes and people. But the words put in his mouth are not his own. 'Behold I have put my words in thy mouth: see, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, and to destroy and to overthrow; to build, and to plant.' Read through in like manner the first two chapters of the prophecy of Ezekiel. Here, perhaps, the main idea is suggested by Isaiah, though an individual stamp

[1] Frances Ridley Havergal.

is put upon it. The dating is even more precise; it was in the fifth day of the fourth month of the fifth year of Jehoiachim's captivity that the great vision with which his book opens was vouchsafed to the prophet, and the roll given to him which contained his message.

2. It is not, however, only at the beginning of his career that the prophet passes through a crisis which is clearly not self-caused. Scattered all through the prophetic writings are expressions which speak of some strong and irresistible impulse coming down upon the prophet, determining his attitude to the events of his time, constraining his utterance, making his words the vehicle of a higher meaning than their own. For instance this of Isaiah's: 'The Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand'—an emphatic phrase which denotes the over-mastering nature of the impulse—'The Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people.' Or again, take this of Jeremiah's: 'I sat not in the assembly of them that make merry, nor rejoiced: I sat alone because of thy hand; for thou hast filled me with indignation.' Or passages like these from Ezekiel: 'So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away: and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit, and the hand of the Lord was strong upon me.' 'And it came to pass'—on a given day—'as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord God fell there upon me.' The one standing characteristic of the prophet is that he speaks with the authority of Jehovah Himself.

Hence it is that the prophets one and all preface their addresses so confidently, 'The word of the Lord,' or 'Thus saith the Lord.' They have even the audacity to speak in the first person, as if Jehovah Himself were speaking. As in Isaiah, 'Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called: I am he; I am the first, I also am the last,' and so on. The personality of the prophet sinks entirely into the background; he feels himself for the time being the mouthpiece of the Almighty. Imagine any one doing this in the present day. When we quote the Bible, indeed, we may say, 'Thus saith the Lord.' But if any one presumed to use such language, not quoting the Bible, we should say that he was either an impostor or mad. The prophets were certainly not impostors, and they were certainly not mad. They were not impostors, because their words often brought them only mockery, abuse, imprisonment, and even death. And they were not mad. Nothing could be more simple or more sincere—more sane, we might say—than the language which they use; there is not the slightest trace of a morbid consciousness about it. The effort, so far as there is an effort, is not to claim a revelation but to escape it. And we, looking back at this distance of time, can see, more clearly than it was possible for their contemporaries to see, that they spoke the words of truth and soberness. Words more sublime or more really illuminative never fell from the lips of man.[1]

Destructive Heresies.

2 Pet. ii. 1.—'Among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies.'

Amid all the darkness of this chapter, one thing becomes increasingly clear as we gaze upon it—that the depraved life condemned in it is the creation of perverse thought, that in 'destructive heresies' is to be found the explanation of this immoral conduct. A man's thought determines the moral climate of his life, and will settle the question whether his conduct is to be poisonous marsh or fertile meadow, fragrant garden or barren sand. The pose of the mind determines the dispositions, and will settle whether a man shall soar with angels in the heavenlies or wallow with the sow in the mire. What we think about the things that are greatest will determine how we do the things that are least. What are your primary thoughts about God? The prints of those thoughts will be found in your courtesies, in your intercourse, in the common relationships of life, in the government of commerce, in the control of the body, and in all the affairs of home and market and

[1] W. Sanday.

field. All the corruption of this chapter is traced up to unworthy conceptions of Christ, to the partial, if not entire, dethronement of 'the Lord of life and glory.' The immorality has its explanation in 'destructive heresy.'

1. In what was their thought defective? What was the essence of the heresy? The secret is here—they had no adequate sense of Christ's holiness. All true and efficient thinking about God begins in the conception of His holiness. If you begin with His love, you deoxygenate the very affection you proclaim. If you begin with His mercy, you deprive it of the very salt which makes it a minister of healing and defence. If you begin with His condescension, it is a condescension emasculated, because you have not gazed upon His lofty and sublime abode. You cannot get a glimpse of the unspeakable humility of Calvary until your eyes are filled with the glory of the great white throne. If you would know the depth you must begin with the height! Our thinking concerning the Lord must not take its rise in His compassions or His love. We must begin with the pure white ray. We must begin with the great white throne.

¶ I stood by a Swiss châlet, on the lower slopes of a lonely vale, and by the house there flowed a gladsome river, full and forceful, laughing and dancing in its liberty, and instinctively I prayed that my life might be as the river, full of power and full of song, clearing obstacles with a nimble leap, and hastening on to the great and eternal sea. And to my voiceless prayer there came reply, 'Follow up the stream to its birth.' And I tracked the buoyant river, and I reached the snow-line, and I found that in the spreading wastes of virgin-snow the singing minister had its birth. And then I knew that full and forceful Christian lives must have their source in sovereign holiness, that only above the snow-line, near the great white throne, could they find an adequate birth. 'Hast thou forsaken the snows of Lebanon?' That is the 'destructive heresy'—to begin one's thinking and one's doing otherwhere than in the holiness of God. To begin elsewhere is to be sure of impoverishment, and to have a life-river which will lose itself in unwholesome swamp and bog, and become the parent of moral corruption and contagion. 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.'[1]

2. If we do not begin with the Lord's holiness, we can have no discernment of the Lord's Atonement. Dwell below the snow-line and you want no Atonement. And for this reason. The man who does not begin his thinking in Divine holiness will have no keen and poignant perception of human sin. What you see in a thing depends very much upon its background. John Ruskin has shown us how the whitest notepaper, exposed before the tribunal of bright sunshine, reveals its inherent grey. It all depends upon the background. If your background be gaslight, your notepaper will appear superlatively white; but if the background be the all-revealing flame of God's resplendent sun, the apparent white will darken into grey. I have seen a sea-gull in flight, with a black cloud for a background, and the bird seemed white as driven snow; I have seen the same bird upon the water, with a background of snowy foam, and the wings were grey. Yes, what is your background? If you do not begin with the holiness of God you will never see the blackness of sin. If your background be some indifferent human standard, some halting expediency, some easy policy, human life, and your own included, will appear passably clear.

¶ I think I am no pessimist, but I confess I look with some alarm at what I cannot but regard as the lessening sense of sin which seems to hold our modern thought and life. One's fears are difficult to express because the dark symptoms themselves are so difficult to disengage and define. But I feel a certain dullness, a certain drowsiness, in the spiritual life. I feel a certain close, enervating mugginess in the moral atmosphere; a want of alertness, of sharp and sensitive response. Our modern Churches are too indolently contented, too prematurely satisfied, and are much too willing to take easy advantage of the compromises offered of the world. We must become suspicious of an indulgent terminology.

[1] J. H. Jowett.

A violent antagonist of the Christian faith, a man whose method of attack is of the slap-dash kind, declared, only a few days ago, 'There is no such thing as sin; there is only error.' The man who begins with that diagnosis can never prescribe for me. But we must see to it that we do not take advantage of this indulgent term, and the Christian pulpit must proclaim the holiness of the Lord, and allow no web of wordy sophistry to hide the great white throne.[1]

¶ For several years after 1907 much of his preaching was coloured by an experience at Balmacara which he himself looked on as marking a turning-point in his ministry. The summer had been persistently cold and wet—perhaps the most inclement of the last twenty years; and in the middle of September most of the large party left Balmacara to return to school or to work. Then, at last, summer came, as Dr. Whyte was left with four, and finally with two, of his young companions. For ten days the loch and the late harvest-fields lay steeped in quiet sunshine, and the great hills towered higher in the faint haze. Twice within a week he disappeared for five hours, and on his return reported that he had walked some seventeen or eighteen miles over beautiful but mountainous roads. It was on one of these walks—by the Strome Ferry road to where it overlooks Lochcarron, and then round by Plockton—that Dr. Whyte found himself wrestling with the question whether he should not, for the remainder of his ministry, preach more than he had been wont to do on the gentler and more hopeful aspects of Chrstian truth, and less on sin and its fruits. But, as he told his congregation when he returned to Edinburgh a fortnight later:

'What seemed to me to be a Divine Voice spoke with all-commanding power in my conscience, and said to me as clear as clear could be: "No! Go on, and flinch not! Go back and boldly finish the work that has been given you to do. Speak out and fear not. Make them at any cost to see themselves in God's holy Law as in a glass. Do you that, for no one else will do it. No one else will so risk his life and his reputation as to do it. And you have not much of either left to risk. Go home and spend what is left of your life in your appointed task of showing My people their sin and their need of My salvation." I shall never forget the exact spot where that clear command came to me, and where I got fresh authority and fresh encouragement to finish this part of my work.'[1]

3. Now see the consequence of these things. If these cardinal conceptions are dull or eclipsed, other precious things will be destroyed. Cast your eyes over this wide-spread corruption. There are some 'conspicuous absences.' There are many missing treasures, whose absence accounts for the corruption.

(1) You miss the instinct of reverence! They tremble not 'to rail at dignities.' It is an ill thing in a life when a man has no sovereignty before which he bows in reverent awe. Take out the august, and life is reduced to flippancy, and levity is the master of the feast both day and night. A man who never reveres will find it impossible to be true. The man who never kneels in spirit can scarcely be upright in life. To bow to nothing is to be master of nothing. If we have no sense of the august to worship, we shall have little sense of sin to expel.

¶ In one of his letters to Matthew Mowat, Samuel Rutherford uses these words: 'Ye should give [God] all His own court-styles, His high and heaven-names.' I think we are a little lacking in the court-style, in this use of the high and heaven-names. But the use of the high names will come back when our souls are humbly gazing upon the high things. When we shall see Him as John the Evangelist saw Him, we, too, shall fall at His feet as one dead. Our souls will always have the stoop of reverent adoration while we keep in view the vision of the holiness of our Lord.[2]

(2) And amid all the movements you miss another treasure—the sense of a large and noble freedom. There is a talk of freedom, but freedom is not enjoyed. 'Promising them

[1] J. H. Jowett.

[1] G. F. Barbour, *The Life of Alexander Whyte*, 531.
[2] J. H. Jowett.

liberty,' and the poor fools are deluded into the thought that they are in possession of it. They are 'doing just as they like,' but of all forms of bondage that is the worst; for this great world, and the laws of its government, are built not upon the 'likes' of men, but upon the rights and prerogatives of God. How can a man be free, even though the song of freedom be ever on his lips, if all the powers in grace and Nature are pledged to overthrow him? All the forces of this wonderful planet are arrayed against the man whose only arbiter is his own 'likes,' and not the will and purpose of God. A man who is in sin, and assumes he is in liberty, and is satisfied with his position, has not risen to the contentment and liberty which are the glory of humankind, but is sunk to the animal bondage of the sow, which gloats and wallows in the mire.

(3) You miss the absence of any perception of the drift and purpose of history. When the great things go out of life, when the sublime is exiled, when reverence dies and the days decline in triviality, men lose their sense of history, and yesterday has no voice. 'And I heard a voice behind me saying!'—that is the voice of yesterday, and it is the privilege of those who are in the fellowship of God to know its interpretation. Sodom and Gomorrah shout through the centuries, and so do Nineveh and Babylon and Greece and Rome! 'If God spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the ungodly': and if God turned 'the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes . . .' —that is the voice of history, the shoutings of experience, and by the people in this chapter the voice is unheeded because unheard. All these 'conspicuous absences'—the instinct of reverence, the feeling of sin, the sense of a noble freedom, and the recognition of historical witness—are accounted for by perverse thinking, by 'destructive heresies', by the degradation of the Godhead, by the eclipse of the great white throne. Having no sense of holiness, they 'denied the Lord that bought them.' The lack of lofty summit explains the corrupt and stagnant plain.

Yet I envy you, 'spite of your bitter pain;
  Because—through earth's hubbub, that grates and jars—
You are listening still to the far-off strain
  Which is sung on high by the morning stars.
You never would turn your eyes to the ground
  From the heaven-sent vision they once had seen;
So ready and waiting will you be found
  When the angels bring you your 'might have been.'

But as for myself, I have piped so long
  The jangling refrains of the market-place,
That now I am deaf to the seraph-song
  Which is floating forever through fields of space:
Among Kedar's tents I have dwelt at ease,
  Forgetting my home in the mansions blest;
The worst has had power my soul to please,
  So it is not for me to attain the best.[1]

The Righteous Man and the World.

2 Pet. ii. 8.—'For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.'

Such was the satisfaction obtained by a man who tried to make the best of both worlds. Yet he is being imitated every day. Wherever men to whom Christ has been made known continue to hanker after the things of this present evil world, there the case of Lot finds a parallel. The man's soul was, as the Greek word implies, literally 'tortured' by the wickedness of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. There were sights and sounds in those places such that we are told in Gen. xviii. 20 and 21, 'And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me.'

Again, we read in the preceding verse that Lot was 'vexed' with the filthy conversation of the wicked. This word 'vexed' stands for a Greek word which means that he was

[1] E. T. Fowler, *Verses Wise or Otherwise*, 76.

weary until he was hardened and distressed, as if by bodily and mental pain, 'with the filthy conversation of the wicked.' This was not a very pleasant position for a servant of God to occupy. It was not a very honourable position for a man who had been the companion of Abraham, the 'friend' of God. It was not a very dignified position for a man who had received abundant proofs of the goodness, mercy, and loving-kindness of the Lord. And yet, when the angel of the Lord would compel him to leave the city, when his very life and the lives of his loved ones were in danger, the man lingered in the cities of the plain. He had chosen to dwell 'in the plain of Jordan' because 'it was well watered everywhere . . . even as the garden of the Lord.' He did not see at that time, though the realization came to him keenly enough afterwards, how absolutely opposed was the life of the man of God in all its aims, inclinations, desires, and hopes to that of the world around him. He thought that the two might be harmonized, and that a man might serve God and yet not deny himself the pleasures and friendship of the world. He no doubt meant rightly, and there are many to-day who mean rightly, but who go astray because their hearts are not so fixed upon the living God, and upon Him alone, that they can say, 'My soul thirsteth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is' (Ps. lxiii. 1). This is the desire which God would have us feel, and it can never be satisfied until men learn that there can be no reconciliation or agreement between the servant of the living God and those who belong to this present evil world.

This question of the relation of the Christian to the world is in the present day one of tremendous difficulty, and the difficulty is not solved by the mere repetition of the command to come out from among them. The relations between the Christian and the world, and between the world and the Church, are rendered more difficult by the complex conditions of modern life. Christian people should consider this question with all the earnestness they can bring to it, in order to solve some of its difficulties and then to live out the convictions their consciences may force upon them. Is it not the question of questions to us who have received the light of the gospel and entered upon the glorious liberty of the children of God? How shall we live in our relation to the world if we would glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's? In God's Holy Word there is no more striking illustration than the example before us of the shame, pain, dishonour, and abject miserableness which a 'righteous' man may bring upon himself and those dear to him, if he attempts to make a compromise between himself and the world.

1. What is a righteous man's relation to the world? What ought to be the relation to the world of the man who is brought into union with Christ? We must first know what we mean by 'the world' before we can answer this question. Of course the world may be used in different senses; and it is so used in Scripture. Let us start with the highest.

(1) In Heb. ii. 5 and vi. 5, we read of 'the world to come,' in each case meaning the perfection of the glory beyond the present existence, something absolutely without sin or spot.

(2) 'The world' may also mean the material sphere in which we pass our bodily existence, and from which we cannot be separate so long as we remain in the mortal flesh. Of this Christ speaks when He says: 'I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.' This world we must be in, and, to a certain extent, be of it; and it is in itself considered absolutely, neither good nor bad.

(3) The whole human race is called 'the world': Luke ii. 1: 'There went out a decree . . . that all the world should be taxed.' Rom. iii. 19: 'That all the world may become guilty before God.' James ii. 5: 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world?' etc.

(4) That which we Christians entitle 'the world,' that sphere of existence which is neither of nor for God, and from which by our baptismal vow we have pledged ourselves to come out, renouncing as sinful 'the pomps and vanities of this wicked world'—this world is spoken of by St. John as 'lying in wickedness': 1 Jn. v. 19. And in 15, 16, he

says: 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.' This use of the word 'world,' then, clearly means any thing or person whatsoever that can come between the soul and God, anything material or otherwise which hinders or prevents fellowship of the soul with its Maker in Christ Jesus the Lord. It is from this world that we are separated when we are placed by faith into Christ Jesus the Saviour.

(5) But the word has a further meaning, which is partly connected with the definition given to it by St. John. People speak of society at large, whether for business or pleasure, as 'the world,' with an ulterior consciousness of the fact that there is something in it not of God. They escape from precise definition upon the ground that there is a borderland in the world about which it is not possible to lay down any close distinction as to this being of the world and that not of the world. So, somewhat after the pattern of Lot, many people know that there is a tendency downward, yet a call upward.

Now we cannot leave this earthly sphere until it pleases God to call us; the world of the wicked we are clearly not to leave, for our Lord says: 'As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world,' and meanwhile 'the whole world' is described as 'lying in wickedness' and Christ gives His one command to His disciples: 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' Yet, whether we understand it in the generic sense of the word or in the sense of that doubtful borderland (which men know in their inner being is not in connection with God, though they like to think that it may not be opposed to Him), it is perfectly clear that the Christian must come out of the world, for in that same last prayer in John xvii. 17, from which we have already quoted, our Lord speaks to God three or four times of 'those whom thou gavest me out of the world'; and again, in xv. 18, 19: 'If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' So that we are in one sense in the world by the commandment of the Lord, and in another sense out of the world by His calling and choice. While, therefore, we are in the place called the world at large, the question is, What relation are we to occupy as regards both that doubtful sphere and that clearly defined sphere which is 'wicked' according to the definition of our Master and of His disciple?

That difficulty may be quickly solved: the wicked world consists of the people who do not care for God, who have no desire above earth and its fleeting enjoyments, no aspirations or longings after God or His people. Take the picture of Sodom as given us by the prophet Ezekiel: 'Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness'—simply this. 'Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness'—that is God's definition of Sodom, and He says that the sin of Jerusalem was infinitely worse (see Ezk. xvi. 47, 48), so that we must not expect to escape from the possibility of sinning like Sodom merely because we have been called to partake of the privileges of the gospel. Such people as the inhabitants of Sodom are described to be have no longings towards God. Let the Christian go into their society, and, if he is a half-hearted man, they will despise him as they did Lot. When the day came that he wished to speak out, see how they treated him; they laughed at him and said, 'This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge.' That is the world's idea of the half-hearted Christian; that is the world's estimation of the man who compromises between God and mammon, eternity and time: they utterly despise and reject him. And when Lot went to his own family, and said, 'Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city, he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.' Yes, those sons-in-law, upon whose union with his daughters he had doubtless prided himself,

were, when the hour of judgment came, the very men to turn upon their father-in-law and mock at all his profession of religion.

¶ We can never stand quite well with the world; it is far too exacting. If out of compliance we yield to it, and play and dance with it, it will be scandalized; and if we do not, it will accuse us of hypocrisy and gloom; if we are well-dressed it will call us mean; it will style our gaiety dissoluteness and our mortification gloom. It will exaggerate our failings and publish our faults; and if it cannot find fault with our actions it will attack our motives. Whatever we do the world will find fault. If we spend a long time at confession it will ask what we can have to say; if we take but a short time, it will say that we do not tell everything. If one little cross word escape us it will pronounce our temper unbearable; it will denounce our prudence as avarice, our gentleness as folly. Spiders invariably spoil the bees' labour. Therefore, do not mind what opinion the world has of you, good or bad; do not distress yourself about it, whichever it be.[1]

Balaam.

2 Pet. ii. 15.—'Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.'

This is the man who describes himself as 'the man whose eyes are open . . . who heard the words of God, and saw the vision of the Almighty'; the man who uttered such wonderful prophecies, who had made such solemn professions of devoted obedience: 'I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more. The word that God putteth in my mouth, that I shall speak.' And after all his pompous titles, and all his many protestations, the finger of God has, as it were, engraved his epitaph in the pages of inspiration: 'Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.

1. The Israelites had arrived on the plains of Moab, at the end of their wilderness wanderings. Balak, the prince of that country, was in fear for the safety of his kingdom. He felt that he could turn to none so hopefully as to Balaam, to rid him, by certain forms of magical incantation, of the presence of this foe; it was believed that in his cursing there would be a peculiar efficacy. Balak was accustomed to deal with the heathen priests, who made a trade of their profession, and who would foretell good or evil to the man who inquired of them, according as he came with a handsome present, or only a mean offering. Therefore, Balak had taken care to say to Balaam: 'Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me; for I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me.' So on the top of the wild mountain range Balaam takes his stand; seven altars are smoking with sacrifices; hard by stands Balak, with many slaves bearing costly gifts, spices and garments, gold and precious stones.

And as Balaam gazes from the mountain battlements of the high places of Baal he sees below him, far beneath his feet, the Israelites abiding in their tents, the banners of the different tribes waving in the wind. The eyes of Balaam are opened, and as he recalls the past of Israel's history, he foresees the future. He remembers the time when they were not a people, the miseries of the nation in their bondage, the fruitless cruelties of Pharoah, the wondrous rescue of Moses, the days of darkness and horror when Egypt was plagued for its offences, the blasted fields, the blighted crops, the dying cattle, the rivers red with blood, the weakness and desperation of the king. All this Balaam remembers. And the opened eyes of the seer must have looked far into the distant future. He must have seen, with prophetic eye, the crossing of the river Jordan, which took place after his bones were bleaching on the battle-field, when Israel conquered Midian. The prophet gazes, but not with earthly eyes, though earthly eyes receive the wondrous vision. To his soul, Futurity comes forth, and lends her hues, her glories, and her unimagined woes. Beyond the far-spreading plains and swelling hills he sees the falling walls of Jericho, the glories of the

[1] J. P. Camus, *The Spirit of St. Francis de Sales*, 290.

Judges, the wisdom of Samuel, the disobedience of Saul, the fatal day on Mount Gilboa, the sorrows and triumphs of David. And then, upon the lofty rocks, he sees a fair and stately city, the pinnacles of the glittering Temple, the towers of defence, and battlements of pride, the lavish magnificence, which surround the wisdom and the weakness of Solomon. And then he sees the darker time of Israel's history, when the hand of the conqueror is sore upon them, when the Roman eagles glitter in the hills of Sion. Yet again, he beholds the rising of the Star which shall come out of Jacob, and the Sceptre which shall come out of Israel. He looks upon the dread Messiah, the King of mighty Israel; he beholds the God-Man riding to Jerusalem, around and in His train a countless multitude crying, 'Hosanna,' and strewing with leaves His pathway. 'I shall see him,' he cries 'but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh.'

2. As we turn aside from this unwilling prophet, who utters a blessing in every word of which there was breathed a curse, what lessons are there for us of to-day? Well, first we learn the awful danger of trifling with conscience. Balaam is a lamentable instance of one who knew what was right, and did what was wrong. And yet this man, who knew so well the difference between right and wrong, actually lent himself to promote the design of Balak by a scheme of iniquity as artful and as malicious as the craft and subtlety of either man or devil could have devised. 'It is all in vain,' he said, 'my attempting to curse Israel, for God hath blessed them, and I cannot reverse it; if you mean to prevail against them, you must make God, who is now their friend, their enemy. To do this, you must separate between them and God. Get them to sin against God, and then He will forsake them. Get them to join in idol worship, then God will turn against them and become their enemy.' This advice was followed, and the result was but too successful. Israel joined himself to Baal Peor, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a great plague. Thus Balaam taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel. Each step that Balaam took was worse than the one before it; he rapidly fell from bad to worse; and his end was destruction. Instead of dying the death of the righteous, he has left behind him a name of infamy: 'Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.'

Once take a false step, and there is no saying how far it may lead on the downhill path of sin and ruin. This trifling with conscience led Balaam to strive against God, to resist his conscience, to desire the most abominable wickedness, and to perish miserably; at last in the ranks of God's enemies. What was the good of such a man talking about justice, mercy, and humility, about the goodly fellowship of Israel, and the blessedness of a righteous death? Where was his righteousness when he was loving the wages of unrighteousness? Where was his mercy when he was plotting the Israelites' destruction? Where was his humility before God when he was devising how to go against God's known will, and to set Him at defiance? No power would induce him to tell a direct falsehood. Nothing would have been easier than to have pretended to Balak that he had cursed the people when he had not done so. This Balaam would not do; he would not say white was black, but he would sully it till it looked black. He was a man far superior to Balak, and yet, feeling that Balak knew him to be a man who had his price, he must have felt the bitter anguish of being despised by a man intellectually far inferior to himself.

3. We learn, too, from this the sin of trying to make a bargain with God. Hundreds of people are trying to do this, endeavouring to serve God a little, and the world a great deal. They will sacrifice to Him so much time on Sunday, and live away from Him all the rest of the week. We also learn from Balaam's history the danger of trying to persuade God to alter His fixed determination. His retiring to consult God on the first occasion was not to ask counsel whether he should go with the men; it was rather to ask permission that he

might go. His detaining them on the second occasion argued that, in the worst possible sense of the word, he was determined to take heaven by force. Hence his eagerness to make use of the extorted permission. He hurried on before the messengers on the journey; he was enraged with the unoffending ass; he made three successive attempts to extort from God permission to curse the chosen people. It is an awful thing to succeed in moving God from His purpose. Succeed we may. The Israelites did so: 'I gave them a king in mine anger' is the language of the Almighty to Israel. This is the price of all successful struggles against God's own will. With the extorted blessing we must take the Divine anger. It is an awful thing to consult God upon any matter upon which our mind is already made up, or, in other words, to ask for permission we intend to take. Permission in such cases means this: 'He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.'

¶ The request is granted, but it is scathed and blighted. They tell us that there is an Eastern fruit which sometimes undergoes a curious process of decay. It looks as blooming and fresh as ever to the eye, but when you take it in your hand it crumbles into dust. . . . A tree may be withered without being cut down.[1]

Knowledge and Love.

2 Pet. ii. 15.—'Forsaking the right way, they went astray, having followed the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the hire of wrong-doing' (RV).

Balaam is the most curious study in the Bible. He is such a combination of opposite qualities, and so hopelessly inconsistent, that you are tempted to pronounce him an impossible being, or to give him up as you give up a riddle. He is always making great professions of godliness, and then going deliberately on ungodly lines. He makes it the habit of his life to ask for Divine guidance, yet when he has got it he generally finds some urgent reason for going the other way. He talks like a saint and acts like a sinner. He never says a foolish thing and never does a wise one. He is always protesting against wrong-doing, yet while the words are in his mouth he steals out and does the wrong. He declares that no silver and gold can tempt him, yet in saying it he pockets the bribe and yields to the temptation. He is wonderfully wise; he has the prophet's vision which sees things present and to come, and yet where his worldly interests are concerned he is blind to things which the ass that he rides upon can see. As a preacher he is sublime, but the moment that he leaves the pulpit you find that he is made up of common clay indeed. He charms you with his noble sentiments, and then disgusts you with his vulgar and mercenary actions. He is always praying that he may die the death of the righteous, and he actually dies the death of a fool, fighting against the very cause which he had blessed.

Now we learn from this story certain simple forcible lessons of everyday application.

1. The shaping power of life is in one's affections, and not in one's knowledge. This man is the typical instance in the Bible of enlightenment failing to direct conduct. In the matter of religious knowledge he is almost abreast of Moses. He has the genius of the poet and the insight of the prophet. His richly-illumined intellect fairly dazzles us. His language is lofty eloquence. His visions are the visions of an inspired seer. From his lips comes that early prediction of the Messiah which we so often quote: 'I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh.' He was as one born a thousand years before his time. Some of his talk would be fit for the Gospels and Epistles. His knowledge was wonderful; his mental gifts were unique and splendid, shining sun-like amid a mass of darkness. He seemed to be one specially endowed and fitted to become a moral guide and teacher of his fellow-men. We wonder how he got his knowledge, it is so high and true. We are charmed with it. He sees so well what constitutes the noble and happy life. To hear him singing the praises of goodness and righteousness is like listening to some

[1] A. K. H. Boyd.

full sweet song. And yet all this illumination fails, nay, it seems to go out in total darkness, when it comes to the actual conduct of life, because it is not knowledge but affections that determine one's moral course, and here the affections are set on the lower and wrong things. 'Balaam the son of Bosor, *who loved the wages of unrighteousness.*' That was the keystone of the building. That was the powerful secret spring which moved the whole machine. He believed in God, but he believed still more in the bribes and honours of this visible world. He admired goodness greatly, but he loved money a great deal more. His head was set toward things Divine, but his heart was fixed on things coarsely human; and the heart got the better of him, as it always does. For it is what we love most that makes us, and the heart's affections are the master forces.

2. Knowledge gets hoodwinked and blinded when the affections are set on lower things. What a picture of darkened eyes this man's story gives us. He knows so well, and yet his knowledge plays the fool with him because his affections are not in the right place. One would think to hear him talk that he had one of the most sensitive and scrupulous consciences with which a human being was ever endowed. It is really a painful conscience—most exacting. Again and again he repeats, I cannot do less or more than what God shows me. The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak. It is no use tempting me. I am quite incorruptible. A house full of silver and gold will not induce me to violate my conscience. Oh, no! I am above all that. In fact, he makes us a little weary with his everlasting protestations about conscience and integrity. If a man talks about his conscience some twenty times a day, you begin to be anxious about it. It must be a somewhat fragile and sickly creature, needing much nursing, and never very strong at the best. We can see that Balaam is quietly working his conscience into the way of his desires. Balak sends magnificent gifts and promises to him, and says, 'Come now and curse this people for me.' He looks at the gifts and weighs the promises; they make his mouth water and his heart leap. He knows he ought to reject them at once. He knows that he has been asked to do a wicked business. His conscience at once says, No! But his heart says, Yes. Those magnificent offers going a-begging! To lose all that! Is there no way out of it? Well possibly he can bring his conscience round. So he keeps the messengers waiting for a night until he has thought the matter over and prayed about it.

He prays with all that gold in his thoughts. He prays with a determination to bring God over to his side if possible; and when men pray in that fashion they generally succeed in getting God's sanction, or at least believing that they have it. At first the Divine Voice says plainly, 'Thou shalt not go'; but the request is urged again, and still again, and at last he fancies that he has secured the Divine consent. Conscience has been shaped to the desired pattern; conscience dances now to the tune that Balak has played; and off the man goes gaily, and with high hopes, to win the coveted prize.

¶ When Charles I. was confronted by the Bill of Attainder against Strafford he consulted various advisers. Archbishop Usher and Juxon counselled him to obey his conscience, and, since he knew that the Earl was innocent, to act according to his conviction. Williams, of Lincoln, caring more for policy than principle, discounting conviction by prejudice or policy, drew a distinction between the King's public and private conscience and advised him to pass the Bill. Charles, in the end, sacrificed his convictions, and by that act exposed himself to the series of miserable inconsistencies which made him so meanly insincere, and at last overwhelmed him. If a man would act with his whole heart and mind, take the straight path of duty, and confront the difficulties of that toilsome road, he must be guided by conviction.[1]

3. A religion without love is a religion without power. It fails amid the temptations and conflicts of life. Balaam's religion is a know-

[1] *The Spirit of Man;* Selected Essays from *The Times*, ii. 24.

ledge of truth without any emotional drawing to it. He believes in God—knows God so far as the intellect can know Him, and he fears God not a little; but there is no love. His religion is like a machine worked by the hand or by the treadle. There is no fervour, joy and sweet heart emotion to supply the furnace fire and keep it going strongly and easily. He believes that God will reward those who do what is right. He believes in a judgment to come, and is afraid of it. He is always making calculations as to how he can avoid God's displeasure; he has a wholesome fear of bringing that displeasure down upon himself. Calculation and fear enter into all he does, and there is no higher thought. The whole of his obedience, so far as he does obey, is obedience to the letter. He will do just what God says, neither less nor more. He dare not do less, because that would bring upon him a penalty, and he takes care not to do more, because he would rather not do so much if he could avoid it. And it is all irksome to him. When he obeys, it is with sluggish feet, and with head turned the other way, like a machine that is always creaking and working heavily for want of oil and springs. You can constantly hear him say, 'Well, I suppose I must do it, though I think it is rather hard upon me, and I should vastly prefer to do the other thing.' It is religious slavery, without a touch of freedom and elation; you never see his feet leaping along the way of God's commandments, they are always dragging. Rebellion lurks under all his professions of loyalty. The joy of doing God's will has no place in him. He never utters a word of gratitude, never a shout of happy feeling, never breathes a whisper which indicates any delight in the service. He is just a religious machine, moving to order, and glad to evade and shirk the order if there is any chance of it. This man loves the world, he loves Balak's money, he loves himself, but he loves God not at all. It is morality without devotion, religion without the least spark of enthusiasm, and obedience without the feeblest tremor or impulse of affection, and it fails to keep him straight. It lets him sink at last into the darkness which is without God. He misses his way because love alone can show the way. He yields to his temptation because love alone can give the strength which resists. He goes on ever protesting that he will do the thing which is right, and rarely or never does it, because love alone can make the purpose strong.[1]

If love is not worth loving, then life is not
worth living,
For store is not worth storing and gifts are
not worth giving,
If love is not;

And idly cold is death-cold, and life-heat
idly hot,
And vain is any offering and vainer our
receiving,
And vanity of vanities is all our lot.

Better than life's heaving heart is death's
heart unheaving,
Better than the opening leaves are the
leaves that rot,
For there is nothing left worth achieving or
retrieving,
If love is not.[2]

Tangled Souls.

2 Pet. ii. 20.—'For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first.'

Our theme is the sorrows of people who have known the better way and have strayed from it—people who, having escaped from the condemnation of their sins and having been made free from the bondage of sinful habit, have again yielded to temptations that have brought them anew into the entanglements that come to everyone who turns his face away from God and righteousness. The backsliding Christian does not get his troubles in the Lord's service. It is when he deserts and turns from his duty that his difficulties come. The old shepherd who offered prayer in a Welsh revival meeting put it exactly right when he

[1] J. G. Greenhough.
[2] Christina G. Rossetti.

lamented his backslidings in these words: 'Lord, I got among the thorns and briars, and was scratched and torn and bleeding; but, Lord, it is only fair to say that it was not on thy ground; I had wandered out of thy pasture.' And there are many others whose scars were obtained in the devil's service, outside the field where duty called them. All the trouble came from wandering away from God, and turning again to worldliness.

1. The writer of the Epistle refers to certain tangles where the backsliding Christian is under peculiar temptation of being caught and destroyed. One of these is covetousness. A man who is determined to have a great deal of this world's goods at no matter what cost to his soul, or the souls of his fellow-men, cannot be a Christian. To be a Christian at all, God must be first. Christ puts it clearly when He says in so many words, 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.' Mammon, there, stands for the world, for physical success of every type, and Jesus says if you are going to follow Him, if you are going to be a Christian at all, Mammon must take a back seat. God and Christ must be first, and must have control.

¶ Watts, one of the greatest painters of the last century, has a great picture entitled 'Mammon.' It reveals an immense figure clad in complete armour of gold. His visor is down so that he has not even eyes to see, as he rides resistlessly forward on a fierce steed, carrying curses rather than blessings to those represented on the crowded canvas. Helpless before the feet of the advancing steed lies 'Love,' dead amid the roses, for money often kills true affection, as many an unhappy marriage testifies. Close by lies a soldier, wounded and dying, whom a nurse seeks in vain to protect from those death-bringing hoofs—for war is Mammon's servant, and by its ruthless cruelty men have been killed in millions. Beside the way, sadly dejected, may be seen representatives of music, poetry, and painting, all of which are counted nothing in comparison with money when Mammon rules the land. Behind the awful figure is Justice, carrying scales—but alas! they are all awry—and bearing a sharp glittering sword which will strike recklessly, because the eyes of Justice are bandaged. And at the back of all these is Death. The picture is a startling reminder of the Scriptural declaration that 'the love of money is the root of all evil.' When men get caught in the snare of covetousness they will sacrifice the noblest part of their nature, harden themselves against appeals to their sympathy, spurn love and duty, and sell their very souls for gold.

Perhaps people in the Church need to be on their guard and always watchful at this point more than at any other. It is not only rich people who are covetous. Many people who are always poor die spiritually of covetousness. Let us make God first in our worship and love and devotion, and then, whatever worldly goods we possess, we shall possess them and they will not possess us—which is a very different thing. The call is for Christians who shall keep themselves clear of the net of covetousness, and accept with love and thanksgiving, as so many good gifts from God, all the blessings that come in the physical world.

2. Another net which the writer esteems to be peculiarly dangerous, even to those who have escaped the pollutions of the world, is the lust for uncleanness of life, the dangerous temptations that come from the flesh. Observation and history show us that no purity, no innocence, no established character for goodness, renders a man or woman immune from the common temptations which belong to humanity. Adam and Eve were innocent, but they were tempted and yielded. David reveals one of the sweetest and purest young lives depicted in the Bible. Nothing could be finer than his boyhood as a shepherd lad on the hills of Bethlehem. Nothing could be more heroic and splendid than his early life as a soldier. Nothing could be more devoted to God, more thoroughly faithful and true, than his life in the wilderness, when he was in exile with a price on his head and suffered all manner of hardship and danger and trying experiences. But after a while, when he had been long king, had acquired much wealth, and had become drunk with power, luxury

and riches and ease and indulgence weakened his moral fibre and blinded him to his obligation to God. His feet were caught in the net of uncleanness, and he sinned grievously. Beware of the beginnings of evil. Beware of permitting in the imagination that which may grow into uncleanness which will destroy.

¶ Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman was in the offices of the Southern Pacific Railway in San Francisco, when the General Passenger Agent asked him if he had seen the big trees of California. He informed him that he had seen them as he looked from the car window the day before, and, smiling, the railroad man said, 'Then you have not seen them, for they must be studied to be appreciated.' Calling for his secretary, he stretched out before Dr. Chapman a measuring line, and went on to tell him, 'I have measured one of the big trees of California. Its circumference is 105 feet, its diameter 35 feet, and the height was so great that one would hesitate to suggest it to those who have never looked on such a forest.' Then he said to Chapman, 'How large would you think the seed of such a big tree might be?' And when he suggested that it ought to be of enormous size, the railroad man poured out in the palm of his hand a number of its little seeds, and they were smaller than a lettuce seed. So it is with the sin of uncleanness of soul. An evil imagination encouraged, an impure thought harboured, an unholy ambition controlling, and the work is begun; but the end no human tongue can describe.

3. Then there is another group of evil things which seemed to our author likely to tempt the Christian away from his safe path. It included such things as self-will, and presumption, and lack of reverence. These things may seem very little at the start, but if allowed to continue and grow they tangle the soul and it stumbles to destruction. The worst ruin and the largest death-roll in the history of Vesuvius, the great volcano of Italy which stands guard over the Bay of Naples, was caused not by the fiery lava in its rushing streams, but by the continual dropping, hour after hour, of a drifting rain of ashes from the crater. They darkened the air so that fleeing for safety was difficult; they broke down the roofs by their accumulated weight, and filled the houses; they choked the lungs; they covered the fields, killed all the crops, and left the land ruined for years. So in life it is not the sudden, tremendous sins that most ruin the soul. It is the insidious growth of selfishness and irreverence and carelessness that brings ruin upon so many Christian people. Henry Drummond says that the whole nature of man is built up of cells. One after another, good and bad, all things have become part of him. His sins have made sin a part of him. The unkind thing you say or do makes you an unkind character. That selfish thing you do makes you selfish. Pure and holy and noble thoughts are expelled, and you become an animal.

¶ There is a Northern legend, told in one of Hall Caine's books, of a man who thought he was pursued by a monster. His grain stacks were fired, his barns unroofed, his cattle destroyed, his lands blasted, his first-born slain. So he lay in wait for the monster where he thought it lived in the chasms near his house, and in the darkness of night he saw it. With a cry he rushed upon it, and gripped it about the waist, and it turned upon him, and held him by the shoulder. Long he wrestled with it, reeling, staggering, falling and rising again; but at length a flood of strength came to him, and he overthrew it, and stood over it, covering it, conquering it, with its back against his thighs and his hands set hard at its throat. Then he drew his knife to kill it, and the moon shot through a break in the clouds, opening an alley of light about him, and he saw its face, and lo! the face of the monster was his own.

Let us not fail of the great message. We need fear nothing but ourselves. No one can harm us but ourselves. But if we yield to selfishness and irreverence and covetousness and uncleanness, we shall be changed into the incarnation of evil which will mean death in life.[1]

[1] L. A. Banks, in *The Homiletic Review*, lxxxi. 317ff.

Memory.

2 Pet. iii. 1.—'I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.'

At first it looks merely like graceful courtesy for the writer to declare that he is not so much giving them new truths as reminding them of what they already know; just as previously in this same letter he says, 'I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them.' Again and again in St. Paul's Epistles also we find marks of the same gracious courtesy, as if his readers knew the things he desired to teach them and possessed the virtues he longed them to have. In the Epistle to the Romans we are touched with this sweet humility and courtesy in the implication that all he hoped to do for them was to remind them of something they knew as well as he. 'I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as *putting you in mind,* because of the grace that is given to me of God.'

This courtesy, however, in assuming previous knowledge is not mere meaningless flattery. That attitude, for one thing, is the true teacher's instinct. To assume knowledge is often the way to bring out into consciousness what is either latent or in danger of being forgotten. It is more than a mere trick to gain the confidence of an audience by giving them a good opinion of themselves. It was really true that their readers knew the facts and conclusions they sought to bring before their notice; they had been taught in the faith; they were aware of the story of God's grace in Jesus Christ, and also of the religious import of that story. And so, as a matter of fact, what they did need was to be reminded of it, to have it impressed on conscience and heart. It bears repetition. All subsequent progress in the Christian life is attained by bringing out into thought and practice what one already knows and believes. Thus these words are more than idle courtesy; they are the statement of a fact that, in moral living, men need to be reminded of what they know, and that only by repetition are faith and knowledge deepened.

1. But there is more in it than this evident truth. The words of the text suggest an even deeper thought of religion and life. We are led to look for this deeper idea when we think that all the Apostles followed this method. To take another instance, this time from St. John: 'I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it.' In fact, the great appeal of religion seems to be an appeal to memory. In the promise of the Holy Spirit to His disciples our Lord states that the work of the Spirit to them would be 'to bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.'

Religion, in passing from mind to mind, can proceed only 'by way of remembrance.' Spiritual teaching must always appeal to what is already there. The whole difference between the deepest insight and the saddest blindness is that between the conscious and the unconscious presence of the same Divine realities. If we would bring the exile or the wanderer from faith to his true home, we have not to convey him over vast intellectual tracts to some new spot, but simply to open his eyes and let him see that he is there.

(1) There are various paths of access by which one mind may reach another and convey thither a light and life unfelt before. You impart to me *direct information,* appearing before me as witness of facts I had not known, or painter of scenes beyond my range. It is thus that the traveller enlarges our picture of the world as it is; the historian, of the world as it has been; the naturalist, of the groupings and methods of terrestrial being; the astronomer, of the relative distribution and motion of the stars. Whatever is communicated to me in this way is added to my science, not to my religion; opens to me more of Nature, but nothing that is beyond Nature; and, even when reporting of human and historical affairs, is credible alike by the pious and the profane. The great realities on which faith reposes are not mere phenomena of

either Nature or history; not finite laws, read in the observatory or detected by the calculus, and missed by the uninstructed thought of man; not intellectual possessions entrusted to the learned, to be doled out, as may be needed, to the ignorant. And the Christian preacher who assumes this attitude, who stands before his fellows as the scientific lecturer before his audience, teaching *downwards* as to a lower level, and professing to deliver information specially his own, misses the whole essence of the very truth he represents.

(2) Again, in order to impress me with some fresh conviction, you may resort to another method: instead of instructing by information, you may try to carry me on with you from some common ground by *reasoning*. You may convict my doubts of inconsistency, my unbelief of folly: you may show that logically I ought to trust, to aspire, to love; that I am at variance with my own doctrine if I do not live the life of faith, do not set foot on my temptations, and rise above my griefs, and carry every cross upon the dolorous way with joy. Am I then amended because I am convicted? Does the rebuke of your right reason lift me on the wing and bear me whither I would go? When the steps of your dialectic have led me to the verge of the finite, am I not left there cold, trembling, and alone, with no eye awake that can look into the infinite? Or when you have opened to me your 'evidences' and stripped me of all excuse for saying that the teachings of Christ were unaccredited, will they have more living hold of me to-morrow than to-day? Ah no! faith is something else than the residuary side of a dilemma, and remains dead as ever after all your refutations of unbelief. If you want the living sap to rise, you must do more than prove that the tree is not withered and the earth is not dry; these are but conditions of possible outburst into green; and not till the spring sunshine beats and the mellow rain and winds sweep through, will the real foliage hang forth. To rely on intellectual methods for the direct advance of devout thought is to mistake philosophy for religion, and to introduce into the gospel that fatal canker which, in the ancient world, enfeebled and dissolved system after system, and left the most splendid remains of speculative genius and ethical wisdom on a social soil dark with unpitied miseries and festering with moral corruptions.

¶ If we satisfy ourselves in mere motions and speculations about the glory of Christ as doctrinally revealed unto us, we shall find no transforming power or efficacy communicated to us thereby. But when, under the conduct of that spiritual light, our affections do cleave unto him with full purpose of heart, our minds are filled with the thoughts of him and delight in him, and faith is kept up unto its constant exercise in trust and affiance on him—virtue will proceed from him to purify our hearts, increase our holiness, strengthen our graces, and to fill us sometimes 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' This is the just temperature of a state of spiritual health—namely, when our light of the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ doth answer the means of it which we enjoy, and our affections unto Christ do hold proportion unto that light; and this according unto the various degrees of it—for some have more, and some have less. Where light leaves the affections behind, it ends in formality or atheism; and where affections outrun light, they sink in the bog of superstition.[1]

2. It cannot be, then, in the comparing and critical reason that the dynamics of faith are to be sought: there must be some higher power of the spirit through which we are to commune together upon holy things; and by trustful surrender to which we may become one in Christ. And this power, already known to Plato as *reminiscence*, is no other than that appeal to remembrance which Christ identified with the function of the Holy Spirit. This appeal, instead of passing *downwards*, like knowledge upon ignorance; or *forwards*, like reason from point to point; moves *inward*, towards a centre of faith and feeling that holds us all. It is by reversing our ambitious steps, not by advancing into original ideas, but by relapse upon simple affections,

[1] *The Golden Book of John Owen*, 104.

not by seizing new stations in philosophy but by recovering the artlessness of the child, that we must find the joy of redemption and the wisdom of faith. No one was ever brought into a purer and loftier state of mind, ever snatched from selfishness into love, from the deadness of sense to the life in God, without amazement that the awful truth should have been so near and sent no thrill through the dull heart, without a shudder at the guilty blindness to the sanctities close at hand; without a consciousness, as of one wakened from the night, that the stately forms of duty now so clear, and the fresh dawn of holy trust, have long been present as the dim suspicions of a dream. Whatever it be that touches our spirit and takes the film away—be it a sorrow that makes us weak and low, or the contact of some saintlier mind, or the flash of a prophet's word, or the music of a poet's strain—it seems to speak to us as we are, to sink home into what was always there; not so much to contribute what is foreign as to reveal what is our own; less to fetch in a light that is not native than to take our darkening hindrances away. That our response is so quick and our shame so deep shows that it is not a new thought which is given, but an ancient affection which is struck—sleeping, it may be, but so full of waking possibilities that we seem to have known it, though not to have lived it, all before. Every conquering call to higher life comes to us by such 'way of remembrance.'

I was quick in the flesh, was warm, and the
  live heart shook my breast;
In the market I bought and sold, in the
  temple I bowed my head.
I had swathed me in shows and forms, and
  was honoured above the rest,
For the sake of the life I lived; nor did any
  esteem me dead.

But at last, when the hour was ripe—was it
  sudden-remembered word?
Was it sight of a bird that mounted, or
  sound of a strain that stole?—
I was 'ware of a spell that snapped, of an in-
  ward strength that stirred,
Of a Presence that filled that place; and
  it shone, and I knew my soul.

And the dream I had called my life was a
  garment about my feet,
For the web of the years was rent with the
  throe of a yearning strong,
With a sweep as of winds in heaven, with a
  rush as of flames that meet,
The Flesh and the Spirit clasped; and I
  cried, 'Was I dead so long?'
I had glimpse of the Secret, flashed through
  the symbol obscure and mean,
And I felt as a fire what erst I repeated
  with lips of clay;
And I knew for the things eternal the things
  eye hath not seen;
Yea, the heavens and the earth shall pass,
  but they never shall pass away.[1]

Remembrance.

2 Pet. iii. 1.—'By way of remembrance.'

'By way of remembrance' is the method of religion.

1. It is so in the life of the Church at large. A revival of religion comes when the Church is recalled to the facts and forces that underlie her very existence. A revival comes not by novel doctrines or a novel creed, but by a firmer grasp of the things that cannot be shaken, a recovery of faith in God and Jesus Christ and the human soul and eternal life. It is when the Church is stirred by way of remembrance that new life seems poured through her veins. Every religious advance is got by a return, as the advancing tide falls back on the basic bosom of the sea to prepare itself for an increased sweep up the shore. All through the history of the Church we see this return to Christ to gain fresh vigour and new insight. It is not a case of new discoveries, but a completer grasp of what the Church already has, a digging deeper to find the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in Christ. The Church falls back, as it were, to review her possessions, to remind herself of

[1] Helen G. Cone.

them. Every revival of religion is to save the Church from forgetfulness—forgetfulness of the essential things. The progress of religious truth is by way of remembrance with a new light in it, not by discovery of the new, but by recovery of the old, seeing more clearly into what it contains, dispensing with all that is temporary and accidental, and laying hold of what is of the essence of truth.

2. In the individual life also the method of religion is by way of remembrance. It is a going back to something we possessed before, listening to an old voice, submitting to an old inspiration, accepting an old instinct. It is a reawakening of our real nature. The religious appeal is ever to something innate, to spiritual capacity which we have by right of birth, though that capacity be smothered by the mass of secular concerns that fill so much of our life. It is really, we feel, a coming to ourselves, having our minds stirred by way of remembrance, as the prodigal son at last, in the far country, came to himself and remembered his father's house. Religion is simple, elementary, going back to the primordial type of life. When we bend to God, it awakens in us echoes of long-remembered and long-forgotten strains; it is like a sweet and solemn and holy memory. When we waken to religion we are struck with our folly that we did not see it before, since it lay to our hand all the time and we just needed to be recalled to it by way of remembrance. It is nothing foreign to our nature, but is our natural life, as God is our natural home. Religion in its essence is to become again a little child, to go back to what we were—what indeed we really are when all the wrappings of worldliness are stripped off us. We see the Kingdom of God when we come thus with the child's eyes and the child's heart. When we are so converted, it is not like being transported into a strange and foreign land, it is like being restored to our own native land after a long and dark exile. We are home at last from a far country, where we should never have been but for our own folly and sin. We are reinstated in our own rightful place.

How true it is that the method of religion is by way of remembrance we see at the very first step of all religion. At the threshold stands repentance, and repentance is awakened memory. It may be the good of the past or the evil of the past that stirs the heart. In any case it is an appeal to memory. How a revived memory can burn into the conscience, and melt the heart, when nothing else can! It may be the recollection of an early paradise, an innocent youth, a happy home, the sweet affections of other days, the angel faces that smile on us still. The ache of desire for some buried past can turn all the present to ashes. That appeal of memory can move a man when all other motives have lost their grip, and bring him back to God as the prodigal turned at the soft thought of his father's house. Or it may be that repentance is induced by a sin that will not be forgotten or a shame that will not be buried. The very despair of memory may do the work, as it probes the life and lays bare the secret things. The way of remembrance is the ethical method of all ages.

> What can assuage the unforgotten pain,
> And teach the unforgetful to forget?

It is part of the burden and the glory of moral existence that we do not forget. It is because we have a life all our own, with a past all our own; it is because we are spiritual entities, with unbroken continuity of personal life, that religion can get at us thus by way of remembrance. No man is safe from his past, be it of good or of evil. So, repentance comes often as a form of recollection. When we consider and remember and come to ourselves, when memory revives, conscience awakes. The buried past reappears as on some awful Resurrection Day.[1]

> Spirit of Remembrance, come,
> Quickening Spirit, strong and wise,
> Bid the slumbering soul arise,
> Wake to speech the conscience dumb.
>
> Bring to mind the dreams of youth,
> Ere the world our tempter proved;

[1] Hugh Black.

Show again the things we loved,
And the vows we meant in truth.

Then, sweet Spirit, lest in pain
Heart should fail, and hope should die,
In thy gentleness be nigh,
Be our Comforter again.

Tell us not our loss alone,
Not alone our follies past;
Show the Love that holds us fast
As a treasure of its own.

Thus renew the failing will,
Give our better self release,
Humbler courage, holier peace,
In the joy of serving still.[1]

The Second Coming.

2 Pet. iii. 4.—'Where is the promise of his coming?'

Christ quitted the world in benediction, and left upon it a legacy of inextinguishable hope. The first manifestation of the hopeful spirit of His religion was in the expectation, confidently held by the Apostles and their followers, that within 'that generation' He would return from heaven in triumph, gather together a faithful community, exterminate the ills of human life, and become monarch over a renovated and immortal world. Sufferers of every class (and the Church had mercy for them all) laid this hope to heart, and stood silent beneath scorn and persecution, believing that the lashes of oppression were numbered now. As the years passed on, and the outer limits of the generation were approached, the flush of expectation became more intense. One after another the Apostles dropped off without witnessing the desire of their eyes, till at last the protracted life of St. John became the solitary and fragile thread on which this splendid anticipation hung. He too died, and Jesus had not returned: and the Church, unwilling to confess its disappointment, extended the term of hope by a liberal construction of the promise. Here and there among the communities of disciples there lingered a few aged men whose life reached back to the years of Christ's ministry: and till they were gone, it was not too late for the Son of Man to come. Expectation became more anxious and feverish every year: passing events were perverted into auguries of its impending realization: the rout of an army, the incursion of a new invader, the rumour of an earthquake, the blaze of a meteor by night, or a stroke of lightning upon a pagan shrine, was caught at with breathless eagerness, and watched as a herald of the last act of human things. But as storm after storm passed and brought no change; as life after life disappeared, and even rumour could find nowhere a surviving representative of Christ's generation, hope faded into doubt; and despair broke loose and cried, 'Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.'

And is not this just what people have often said, and are saying to-day, and, perhaps, what many of us feel, if we do not say so? It may be that concerning the Second Coming of the Lord not a few of us have ceased to be particularly interested. The literalism of the early Church no longer holds us. As in science slow progressive æons of time have become the mode in place of sudden catastrophes, so a like subdued colouring has tinged our belief in, or tacit acquiescence in, that article of the Creed, 'He shall come again with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead.' Meantime the worldly world around flatly ridicules the idea altogether. It is a theological curiosity, an ecclesiastical bugbear, a religious scare! Where is the promise of His coming, that is, What has become of its fulfilment? they say. 'Years roll on, century succeeds century, and nothing happens to bear out the supposed prophecy.'

Well, what is the answer? The writer gives us a threefold line of argument to disarm this sort of criticism.

1. First, he shows that it disregards facts; history is against it. It is not true to say that all things continue as they were from the

[1] W. G. Tarrant, *Songs Devout*, 32.

beginning. 'The ancient world,' he says, 'being overflowed with water, perished.' Now, whatever view we take of the Deluge, whether it was local or universal, it stands the test of historical examination, seeing that some such event is testified to by other Oriental records besides Genesis. The world, it may fairly be argued (or, at any rate, the part of the world's surface with which history has to do), was so transformed by the Deluge that the antediluvian world may be said to have perished, and a new world to have arisen from the chaos. This is quite on the lines of our Lord's own teaching: 'As in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, . . . and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be' (Mt. xxiv. 38). It is a mere effort of the imagination to see that, granted a catastrophe such as that which occurred once, a greater overthrow of the material organization of the universe may be in the future. 'The heavens and the earth which are now,' he says, 'are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment.'

Yes, but it is just the imagination that makes the difficulty in our minds—it is more the imagination, or the lack of it, than the reason. Imagination is so beset and possessed by the pressure of present interests and hopes for the immediate future that a confidence is created within us that things will go on for ever very much as they are now. We are told that in some way (perhaps beyond our present power of understanding) human society as we know it, and the material framework of our globe, will come to an utter end. But this is what imagination revolts against. The present order looks so stable and so strong, so vigorous, and so self-reliant, that nothing, we imagine, can shake it. Well, doubtless, so thought the Egyptians under their ancient monarchy; and the Persians under their world-empire; and the Romans, to whom the social structure of their empire seemed at least as strong as the masonry of their Coliseum, which has survived it by more than a thousand years. May not our imagination be as much at fault as theirs? And shall we not be assured that in some way and at some time the words of this writer, who was but echoing his Master, will be borne out in actual accomplishment? 'The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.'

2. But the objectors to whom the writer was replying, and their modern representatives, would probably make more of the indefinite postponement of Christ's coming than of any supposed impossibility about it. And what does he say to this, 'Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' God looks at time in a very different way from the way in which man looks at it. Man's outlook is so limited that it may easily seem that an event which has been delayed for centuries will not really take place at all. But with the Infinite Mind long and short periods of time do not mean what they mean to us. When we speak of long and short periods of time the adjectives 'long' and 'short' are only comparative terms, relative to some standard that we have in our minds. A period appears to us long until we compare it with another which is longer, and the longest period that the human mind can conceive of must be insignificant when it is compared with eternity. We have our standards for the measurement of time, but God has the standard of eternity.

We see this more clearly if we reflect that to us the passage of time seems slow or rapid according to our occupation. If we are unfortunately suffering pain of body, or great anxiety of mind, time, as we say, hangs heavily. Lying on a bed of pain at night one counts the minutes, half-minutes, seconds; will the morning never dawn? On the other hand, when we are experiencing great pleasure, either of mind or of body, we become almost insensible to the flight of time. And so from this may we not understand how God, who is the source of all goodness, because He is in Himself infinitely blessed—the greatest example of, as well as the cause of, all happiness—can be thus insen-

sible to the flight of time? Thus we can see how different must be God's measuring of time from man's. So we may well understand why the writer says, 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise.' The apparent delay does not mean slackness on God's part.

3. But our author has another argument. God, he says, is allowing time for the ingathering of souls into His Kingdom; time for the working out of His redeeming purposes through the preaching of the gospel; time for the accomplishment of the number of His elect. He is 'not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' 'Make good use, then,' he says in effect, 'of this extension of time, of this apparent delay, which is your opportunity for service.'

¶ Every judgment, even the least, is preceded by a period of preparation or delay. The Flood did not come until 'the wickedness of man was great on the earth.' Physically, it was the product of natural causes, which were in operation long before they issued in a scene of ruin and death; and morally, it was provoked by a volume of human wickedness which just reached its height when the floodgates of heaven were opened. Jerusalem did not fall until it had slain the Just One and had killed His saints and servants; but 'the political and religious causes which led to its fall had been at work for a hundred years. The French Revolution, with its repudiation of the Christian past, with its irrational passion, with its frightful tragedies, burst upon Europe suddenly enough in 1789. But for three generations, at the least, it had been preparing amid the splendours and the sins of the old French monarchy; it, too, like a flood, or a volcanic eruption, was a thing of regular growth; it, too, might have been foretold almost in detail by a close observer of men and affairs; it, too, was delayed year after year, in mercy, until at last the fountains of the deep broke up, and all that had been the France of Christian history was engulfed in the whirlpool of destructive passion.

So it will be—so it is with the last Great Day. It will not be the first physical catastrophe that has changed the surface of this planet; ages of silent evolution precede the decisive moment which changes the surface of a globe by flood or by fire. It will not be the first moral catastrophe that has profoundly affected the destiny of man, though it will be beyond all comparison the greatest. True, it is not yet upon us; but it is surely, silently, in preparation. As the moments pass they bring us nearer one by one to the Second Advent. As lives are lived and then drop silently out of sight, as actions are done or left undone, one way or the other they tend to make the Judgment more imperative, more inevitable. Each man, each nation, lives, and by living brings it nearer; its causes are ever accumulating new force and urgency; the angels are ever moving about silently, making the necessary dispositions. And at last their task will be achieved, and the Judge will come. One cause still delays it—the love of God. Christ's coming will be sudden when it does take place; but it will be the product of a lengthened preparation. 'The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.' [1]

God's Slowness.

2 Pet. iii. 8.—'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.'

Between the long delay in Christ's coming and the bitter raillery of the pagans among whom they lived, the Christians were in danger of becoming victims of faithlessness and despair. Why did not God intervene? they asked. Why did He not establish His cause? Why did He allow wickedness to triumph? Why did He permit His saints to be slaughtered? Why did He tolerate injustice and wrong and make no sign? It is with that problem that the writer is dealing in the paragraph of the text, and the text itself gives at any rate a part of his answer to it. He bids these fainting, sorely tried Christian people remember that time is not the same thing to God as it is to us. 'Long' and 'short'

[1] H. P. Liddon.

have no meaning for Him who lives in an eternal Now—or, at any rate, they have not the same meaning for Him as they have for us. Sometimes He seems to take a thousand years to do the work of a day; sometimes He does in a day what looks like the work of a thousand years. The writer's answer is that we must not apply our time-measurements to the operations of the Eternal. We must not judge the Lord by feeble sense. Man, whose breath is in his nostrils, and whose life is like that of the flower of the grass, cannot rightly judge the doings of the Lord. When we are dealing with the activities of God we are in a realm where days and months and years lend us no aid. We must just trust and wait the Lord's leisure.

1. First, let us think of the sphere of *Nature*—of this wonderful universe in which God has placed us. Like a scroll upon its bosom *this* is written, that with the Lord a thousand years are as one day. It is true that when we read her story, we learn of terrific velocities in Nature. We are appalled at the resistless speed with which the planet sweeps upon her course. But the great lesson of these our latter days has been the discovery not of speed, but of the infinite and tireless patience that lingers at the back of all activity. Millions of years have not been thought too much for the perfecting of the tiniest weed. The hoof of the ox will crush it in a moment; but the hand of God was shaping it for ages. And in the hardening of every ruby, and in the channelling of every glen, we have been wakened to recognize a power that is mightily and ceaselessly persistent. It was Augustine who said this of God: God is patient because He is eternal. He takes His time because all time is His. There are a thousand years within His day. And that is a lesson we are learning now, with a fullness that was undreamed of once—how slow and sure and splendidly persistent God has been in fashioning the world.

¶ We have seen in the newspapers pictures and accounts of eggs laid by creatures whose race has been long extinct on the earth—giant ichthyosauri who must have lived at least ten millions of years ago. Many more millions of years must have elapsed before those eggs were laid, before those creatures came to their full development, and were capable of reproducing their species in this way. The ten-million-year-old eggs tell us of unnumbered millions of years previous to themselves. The mind reels in its attempt to measure these immense periods of time; for, for all practical purposes, they are infinite, like the distances of the stars.[1]

The ages have passed and come with the beat
of a measureless tread
And piled up their palace-dome on the dust
of the ageless dead,
Since the atom of life first glowed in the breast
of eternal time,
And shaped for itself its abode in the womb
of the shapeless slime:
And the years matured its form with slow,
unwearying toil.
Moulded by sun and storm, and rich with the
centuries' spoil,
Till the face of the earth was fair, and life
grew up into mind,
And breathed its earliest prayer to its god in
the dawn or wind,
And called itself by the name of man, the
master and lord,
Who conquers the strength of flame and tempers the spear and sword.[2]

2. Think, again, of the sphere of *revelation*. Does not that same mark of slowness meet us there? The one thing God has never done is to be in a hurry to reveal Himself. Suppose you were to ask a child this question, How do you think that God will speak to men? Would not the answer be of sudden voices pealing from the silence of the sky? Well, as a matter of fact, God *has* spoken to men, for that is just what we mean by revelation: but His speaking has been as different from that as a strain of music from the din of thunder. Not suddenly, in one stupendous moment, has God declared the riches of His grace. That would have been cruelty and not kindness, for men would have been blinded by the glare.

[1] E. H. Eland.
[2] A. H. Sayce.

It has been here a little, there a little; one syllable to-day and another to-morrow, until at last these broken syllables blended in the Incarnate Word. By everything they tried and all they suffered men were taught a little more of God—by the voice of conscience which they could not stifle, by the vision of ideals they could not crush; by all the whisperings of the world without, by all the yearnings of the heart within; by the song of psalmist, the oracle of prophet, the blood of the sacrifice upon the altar. Think of that first promise made in Eden, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. How long, O Lord! Why tarry the wheels of thy chariot? When shall this promised Deliverer appear? And we know what ages had to pass away, and what eager faces had to be lifted heavenward, ere 'in the fulness of the time' there came the Saviour. When He came, a day was as a thousand years—in that one day was blessing for millenniums. But *till* He came it was the opposite—a thousand years with God were as a day. And men arose and played their part and died, and generation succeeded generation, and all the time, slowly yet unceasingly, God was making ready for Christ Jesus.

¶ What is that life of faith which historically began with Abraham? It is a friendship, an intimacy, between man and God, between a son and a father. Such an intimacy cannot be idle or stagnant; it cannot arrest its instinctive development. It holds in it infinite possibilities of growth, of increasing familiarity, of multiplied communion. And thus, such a friendship creates a story of its own; it has its jars, its frictions, its entanglements; alas! on one side, its lapses, its quarrels, its blunders, its misunderstandings: and then, on the other, its corresponding indignations, and withdrawals and rebukes: and, yet again, its reconciliations, its reactions, its pardons, its victories.

Ever it moves forward on its chequered path: ever God, the good Friend, spends Himself in recovering the intimacy, in renewing it, in purging it, in raising it. Its conditions expand; its demands intensify; its perils deepen; its glories gather; until it consummates its effort in the perfected communion of God and man—in Him who completes and closes the story of His ever-growing intimacy, by that act of supreme condescension which brings down God to inhabit and possess the heart of man: and by that act of supreme exaltation which uplifts man into absolute union with the God who made him.[1]

3. The slowness of God, again, is often manifest in regard to the great matter of our *duty*. Not all in a moment, but rather step by step, does God reveal the pathway of our duty. Think, for example, of the case of St. Paul when he was on his missionary journey. First he wished to go southward to Galatia, and the Spirit of God forbade him to go there. Then his heart turned northward to Bithynia: would it not be a joy to preach the gospel there? But once again his will was crossed, and the Spirit of God suffered him not. We understand now why that was so; he was being led to the great hour at Troas. He was travelling to the man of Macedonia, and to the summons from the shore of Europe. But the point to note is that St. Paul did not know that; nor could he tell why doors were being shut: he could only leave it in the hand of God, who seeth the end from the beginning. How easy it would have been for God to let St. Paul know why he was being baffled. But it was not thus that heaven dealt with St. Paul, and it is not so that heaven deals with us. God leads us forward one step at a time, giving us light and strength for that one step, and only as we take it and are strong does He reveal the pathway of our duty.

He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.[2]

4. There is one other sphere, and that is the sphere of *judgment upon sin*. Sometimes God is very swift in penalty; at other times, inex-

[1] H. S. Holland.
[2] Tennyson.

orably slow. There are sins which instantly condemn a man, and make him a social outcast in a day. They cannot be hidden, and, being cried abroad, they shatter the character and blight the home. But if there be sins that go before to judgment, there are far more that follow after, and such sins may track a man for years before at the long last they track him down. This word has never been cancelled, 'Be sure your sin will find you out.' You think that because five years are gone, or ten, it is all right; your sin is dead and buried. But with God a thousand years are as a day. He tarries, but He has not forgotten.

¶ 'My Lord Cardinal,' said the unhappy French queen to Richelieu, 'God does not pay at the end of every week; but at the last *He pays*.'

God's Swiftness.

2 Pet. iii. 8.—'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.'

It is usually supposed that in this text the same thing is stated in two different ways. That is not so. The writer is saying two contrasted things about God. He bids these tried and harried Christians remember that God is sometimes amazingly slow, but sometimes also He is amazingly swift. Sometimes He seems to take a thousand years over a day's work, and sometimes He does in one day the work of a thousand years. God is the slow God—we know that by painful experience. But let us not forget that He is also the swift God. If the one truth about God is the trial of our patience, the other may well be the spring of our faith and courage. If sometimes He seems to take a thousand years over a day's work, at other times He seems to accomplish the work of a thousand years in a day. For ages He seems to do little or nothing, and then in a flash He transforms the world. Years pass during which God seems to be quiescent, and then suddenly He accomplishes some amazing miracle that changes the entire course of history. God reveals Himself as the *swift* as well as the *slow* God.

1. Consider the story of the relation between the Roman Empire and the Christian Church. From the time of Nero Rome took up the attitude of hostility towards Christianity. The Roman rulers saw in the Church and its teaching a menace to the State. Therefore they took up fire and sword to destroy it. There were ten great persecutions, say the Christian historians, but the greatest of them all was that of Diocletian and Galerius. These two emperors set themselves to the task of destroying the Christian Church 'root and branch.' They directed their persecuting zeal not only against the Christian people, but also against the Christian buildings and the Christian books. So resolute was their determination, and so complete the ruin they wrought, that to their other titles they added this, 'Destroyers of the Christian Superstition.' That persecution continued down to the year 311. Rome seemed absolutely set and determined to stamp out the Christian faith. Any suggestion that Rome itself would submit to the faith would have been scouted. Nothing seemed less likely. And yet God accomplished in a day what looked like the work of a thousand years. Rome, that was persecuting in the year 311, had the Cross of Christ upon its banners in 312. In that mighty and revolutionary change, God showed Himself the *swift* God.

2. Take for another illustration the story of the Protestant Reformation. For centuries before Martin Luther was born there had been attempts at reform. The souls of holy men had revolted against the wickedness of the Church. John Wyclif was a reformer, John Hus in Bohemia was a reformer, Francis of Assisi and Savonarola of Florence were reformers. But none of their efforts seemed to avail anything. Wyclif died a natural death, but his followers, the Lollards, were persecuted and slain without mercy. John Hus and Savonarola both perished at the stake. Francis' followers were absorbed and rendered harmless. All hopes of being able to reform the Church and to purify religion and to liberate the souls of men seemed vain. That mighty but wicked Church seemed un-

assailable. Then God gave to Martin Luther the great experience of the forgiveness of sins, and, through the agency of this forgiven and redeemed man, God made religion real to multitudes and brought emancipation to half Europe. What seemed so hopeless was accomplished in a moment, so to speak. What reformers had been vainly trying to do for centuries was brought to pass within the compass of a few years. The word of God was set free. The course of history was altered. The face of Europe was changed. God showed Himself the *swift* God.

3. Take for another illustration the story of the Evangelical Revival in England. Ever since the Restoration, religion had been decaying and morals had been relaxing, until at length it had come to this—that morally England had sunk pretty nearly as low as it could, while religiously it was sceptical to the core. Bishop Butler himself complained that in his day it was taken for granted by everybody that Christianity was to be dismissed as untrue. Certain Christian apologists tried to *reason* England into a better mind. But all their efforts had about as much effect as the sprinkling of rose water on a sewer. Then the heart of John Wesley got strangely warmed, and he set about his work of preaching throughout the length and breadth of England. And in a few brief years the England which to Butler seemed hopelessly sunk in scepticism was quickened into a new and lively faith. In that amazing revolution God showed Himself the *swift* God.

4. Now take one illustration from secular history: it shall be that of Napoleon and his empire. In the process of the years Napoleon made himself practically the master of Europe. Italy, Prussia, Austria, Russia—he had humbled them all. The various kings of Europe trembled at his nod and humbly did his bidding. His power was at its height and his authority seemingly unassailable when he undertook his expedition to Russia. But in that winter God undid all that Napoleon by his years of campaigning had accomplished. He shook his empire to its foundations. He brought it crashing to the ground. In less than two years Napoleon was in Elba; in less than three years he was in St. Helena. The man who had ground Europe beneath his heel was confined to a tiny island in the Atlantic. During the years of his success God seemed the slow God—the fields of Europe were drenched with blood and He made no sign; but in the sudden and utter overthrow that at length overtook him God showed Himself the *swift* God.[1]

Things and Persons.

2 Pet. iii. 11.—'Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be?'

NOTICE how 'things' and 'persons' are placed in juxtaposition in this verse. Things, however solid, have to go, but persons remain. The indestructible entity that we call personality will survive when 'all that seems shall suffer shock.' Nothing can obliterate or submerge it. Though all things go into liquidation and vanish in the void, the ego will pass unhurt through all the fires of death and through all the processes of change and decay, to endure through all the years of God.

1. *Things.*—We call the visible universe the great system of things. We need sometimes to remember that they are things only. The uplifted mountains which awe us with their sublimity; the great sea, stretching into the sky all around, and bringing infinitude almost to sight; the tokens of eternal power and majesty, gleaming throughout the dim immensities above us, are simply things. The animal and vegetable creations belong to the same category. There are endless varieties of life, instinct, structure, and form; but all are things. Vernal bloom, the singing birds among the branches, the summer glory of the landscape, the autumnal pomp of setting suns, gigantic and lustrous constellations are merely things. Worlds of startling beauty, invisible to the naked eye around us, and worlds of overpowering grandeur in viewless

[1] J. D. Jones.

spaces above and beyond us, are things. Objects of intense loveliness, nigh at hand, revealing the great Creator's might and goodness to sense; and objects of brightness and wonder far away, portraying to reason and imagination His boundless energies and His everlasting years, are only things.

The possessions on which men so much pride themselves, and which attract such consideration from their fellows, are things, and nothing more. Wealth, mansions, equipages, and lands find their place in this list. Yet what sweat and toil are given to these objects! What vanity they occasion, how much homage they constrain, what numerous cares they engender, how many disappointments come in their train!

Our very bodies, so closely related to ourselves, inseparably united with us for this life, are yet not ourselves. They are but things. Youthfulness, elasticity, and bloom; age, debility, and decay, are not ourselves; they are things only—frail and changing things.

2. The other division of existence is *Persons*. —Persons are endowed with intelligence and will; they discern both right and wrong; they love and loathe. I am conscious that I am myself, the same responsible individuality, from year to year. I think, I resolve, and I know myself to be accountable for my deed. My personality, my abiding self—*that* remains firm, whatever fluctuates. There is always light here. Here no shadow falls.

(1) In the Divine intention things are subordinate to persons. The universe existed myriads of ages before man; yet even then the whole course of things anticipated the needs of persons. The infinitesimal animalcules which swarmed in preadamite seas, and vast reptiles that crushed their ponderous bulk through the colossal vegetables, and glared from the reeking swamps of that unknown time, existed for the intelligence of our passing hour. The gigantic forests embedded in our seams of coal were not for themselves, but for men. For us the slow process of untold ages composed the rocks; for us protracted convulsions opened the treasures of the hills, and flung the hoary mountains high in air. Millions of years ago the stars were enkindled, and the sun was robed in volatile flame, that our spectroscopes might analyse their beams, and that chemical science might explore their mysterious fires.

Business, riches, competence, poverty are tests of men. They are instruments of education and discipline. None of these things are for themselves; they are ordained for persons —for the development of the mind and conscience and heart of man. The lowest end that occupation can reach is affluence or penury. Intelligence, industry, uprightness, nobleness, humility, unselfishness, benevolence —these are the growths which a human soul may mature in the midst of the temptations and perils of secular employment. The solemn question about everyone is not, What has the man made by business? but, What has business made the man? The world's creed is—Man exists for business, not business for man.

The same perversion is visible in the misuse of the human body. One needs sometimes to ask, Which is the man, the body or the soul? Which is the subservient, and which the supreme? Some seem to think that the mind fulfils its vocation when its ingenuity is taxed to the highest to bedeck the body; and others lavish all the rich endowments of the spirit to indulge and pamper the flesh. The outer man is designed to be the hourly test of the inner man. The end of the *thing* is answered when the intellectual, moral, and spiritual habits of the *person* inhabiting and using it are expanded and perfected. The husk is shed when stem and leaf appear; and when the bloom stands forth in its beauty the shell which enclosed the seed is forgotten.

¶ There is a house which man inhabits, from the day of his birth to the day of his death: he does not like the house, and he would be glad to exchange it for a perfect dwelling.

Man would destroy his house, and build one he might like better, if only he could discover how to build a different one:

Yet man has great consolations; for, though he cannot change the outside, he may make the inside of his house as beautiful and as

clean as he chooses;

He may hang his walls, and line his shelves, with the work of the Masters of all the ages; and he may use his house as a work-place for his peculiar genius to develop its individual gift in;

And he is free to use his house as a divine temple of creation, as a holy sanctuary of birth, and as a resting-place of death.[1]

3. *'Things' shall be 'dissolved.'* 'The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. . . . All these things shall be dissolved. . . . The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.' The Bible is not an oracle of science. Religious truths and prophecies in Holy Scripture are conveyed in the phraseology of the day in which they were uttered. Physical events are always depicted from the visual point of view. We could not tell certainly, from these words, whether the stellar systems are to be included in the ruin predicted for our earth or not. Our world and atmosphere might be involved in conflagration without even disturbing our own solar economy. But we cannot dogmatize. We know too little. The present order of the universe is evidently not eternal; and the science which assures us of this fact will hardly contend that the system must be to everlasting which is plainly not from everlasting.

About the physical overthrow of our own planet, as at present arranged and inhabited, there can be no doubt. 'All these things shall be dissolved.' 'The earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.' The 'works' of the Creator and the 'works' of the creature shall consume together. The globe is but our larger habitation, and, like the body which we occupy, it will not survive its uses. It is not 'shall be dissolved.' It is, 'are being dissolved.' Future events are close to the vision of the seer. He is transported to the very midst of the uproar, confusion, and fire which he depicts. But there may be fact here as well as futurity. 'All these things are being dissolved.' There is something of the remotest future in every immediate present. 'We all do fade as a leaf.' The elements of death, to which we must succumb at the last, work in us through childhood, youth, and maturity. So, too, the seeds of the final ruin are sown in the world now, and grow from hour to hour. 'All these things are being dissolved.' What know we of the origin, the progress, and the final history of a body like our world? It is impossible to conjecture what is concealed in the stupendous orb to which we are chained by stronger than iron bands. The slow and silent processes of change within and without, we may be sure, are forecasting the day. Perhaps there are created minds that need only to look on a scene like ours in order to be able to predict the moment when the dread catastrophe shall break forth.

4. *'Persons' continue to be.* 'Persons' cannot 'dissolve.' The consciousness of existence and the sense of responsibility are indestructible. They may be darkened, but not extinguished. The intellectual and moral energies of the soul are a fire which may be buried, and, for a while, be constrained to smoulder; but, uncovered to the air, it will break forth once more into dazzling flame.

How unlike are things and persons from what they seem! 'Things' appear to survive 'persons,' and the works of man to outlive man himself. While the sharp lines of the pyramids have risen against the Egyptian sky, generations on generations, of all countries, colours, and climes, have vanished from the face of the globe. The titles and the fortunes of nearly all these millions are forgotten, and will never be recalled upon the earth. Here and there one out of the past has a name in our thought, and a shadowy place in our imagination. What a Babel of tongues has murmured around the base of these mighty piles! Yet where are the upturned faces which from age to age have scanned these vast monuments of human sweat and toil?

Stand beneath the shadow of the Colosseum at Rome. It seated eighty-seven thousand people. The population of a vast city flowed

[1] E. G. Cheyne, *The Man with the Mirror*, 14.

hither. Here they gazed on exciting spectacles, clapped their hands, and rent the air with acclamations. Wealth, beauty, fashion, nobility, and imperial pomp gathered here. Where now are these human physiognomies, where the hum of many tongues? Silence reigns at this moment throughout that vast area, and around is crumbling ruin.

That is as things seem; but all those *persons live on.* When not an atom of these relics of extinct civilizations survives, every soul will continue in all its unimpaired integrity, and in all its inextinguishable life. Ah! what changes persons can pass through, and still remain the same! What differences there are between childhood and age, and yet the individual continues as before! A man may so alter his earthly condition that the past may become a dream, and will no more be realized in the present. He may modify and even cancel all the judgments which he ever held, and may reverse all his moral principles and religious hopes. But not even a suspicion will ever cross his mind to confuse the unquestioned conviction that, as a person, he is unaltered and the same. A man may stand in the midst of scenes from which he has been long estranged, and bring with him nothing but the impressions of the life through which he has been passing during later years. Surrounded by objects once familiar, he will find forgotten memories crowd upon him, but the immediate will be the reality, the remote but a dream. Yet no doubt will come near him that his stable personality can be any other than the same individual consciousness which it was at the beginning. How, too, a man's inward life may move upwards, and his individuality remain the same unimpaired inheritance! When half a century has fled, a man's external conduct may seem to all to be the repetition of just what he did half a century before. In strength of principle, in loftiness of motive, in fineness of feeling, whole moral worlds may lie between the contrasted periods of his career; yet he himself is the one, conscious, responsible individual all the way through. So will it be with good and evil, through whatever scenes of existence our human being is prolonged. Life and death, the grave and judgment, heaven and hell, immortal activity and endless years will never dim the individuality of a single soul. Personality in every deathless spirit will stretch in a line of unwavering light to all eternity.

¶ There are some who are willing to admit that death does not mean annihilation, but who hesitate to accept the possibility of the mind or soul surviving as a definite personality. They are prepared to go so far as to allow that, at death, a spiritual something may leave the body, and merge at once into some great central source of soul, losing its identity in the infinite. This, however, would not mean the survival of the soul as an ego, and I do not accept the theory. I am persuaded that the soul persists as personality, and does not change into some lower form of 'energy,' blown upon by every vagrant wind that frolics between the stars. It persists as personality with this essential difference, that it is freed from the trammels and limitations of the physical body.

It does not lose its identity, like the water of a bottle opened in the depths of the sea, or like air that escapes into the surrounding atmosphere from a deflated tyre. It remains a separate entity; it persists as an ego.[1]

The Day of God.

2 Pet. iii. 12.—'Looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God' (RV).

'THE day of God!' What is meant by this striking expression? Can it be intended to mean that God has left the present time to itself; that He has retreated into a distant future, where He will claim rights and exert a jurisdiction that do not now belong to Him? Certainly this notion cannot be entertained together with any worthy idea of the Almighty and the Ever-living. All days most assuredly are His who, being Eternal, is the Lord of time. Each hour, each minute, as it passes, is passed beneath His eye. It is passed in His encompassing Presence, for whom time, with its sequence of artificial or natural measurements, cannot exist.

[1] R. W. Mackenna, *The Adventure of Death*, 143.

1. Such a phrase must describe, not God's absolute relation to any one moment of time, but our human way of looking at it. By the 'day of God' is meant a day which will not merely be His, as all days are, but will be felt to be so; a day in which His true relation to time and life, which, in the case of the majority of men, is only dimly perceived, will be unreservedly acknowledged; a day which will belong to Him, because, in the thoughts of every reasonable creature of His hand, whether for weal or for woe, He will have no rival. That the 'day of God' means, first of all, a day in which God will take the first place in the thoughts of men seems to result from an examination of the language of the Bible.

(1) In the Old Testament, this word 'day,' meaning not seldom a season or epoch, is constantly joined to some word denoting an event, or idea, or characteristic with which the particular time referred to was associated in the minds of men in general or of the sacred writer. Thus the Psalmist speaks of 'the day of temptation,' 'the day of his trouble,' 'the day of God's power,' 'the days of God's wrath'; and Isaiah, of the 'day of visitation,' 'the day of God's fierce anger,' 'the day of grief and desperate sorrow'; and Jeremiah, of 'the day of evil,' 'the day of affliction,' 'the day of calamity.' These several periods, thus described, are sometimes present, sometimes not distantly future; and sometimes they point on to a very remote time, of which the present or the near future is a pledge or an anticipation. Or, again, some city or nation is named which has had a tragic history, and its day means the epoch of its suffering or ruin; and thus Isaiah speaks of 'the day of Midian,' and Ezekiel of 'the day of Egypt,' and Hosea of 'the day of Jezreel,' and one of the later Psalmists of 'the day of Jerusalem.' That which is common to all these phrases is the prominence in men's thoughts of the subject, whether it be a race, or a city, or a vicissitude; and thus we see how words which are at first sight so strange and embarrassing as 'the day of the Lord' might come to be used. The reference is to the time when the Lord is to take precedence of all else in the thoughts of men.

(2) The phrase occurs again and again in the Hebrew prophets, and, as far as the Old Testament is concerned, it is peculiar to them. Sometimes, indeed, they speak of 'the day of the Lord's anger,' 'the day of the Lord's sacrifice,' 'the day of the Lord's vengeance,' but more frequently, as in Isaiah, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, Malachi, of 'the day of the Lord,' or more fully, 'the day of the Lord God of hosts.' By this expression, too, they often refer to very various events: sometimes to some near exhibition of God's power in the history of Israel or of the adjacent peoples; sometimes to a far-off occurrence, general and comprehensive in its scope, of which the nearer events are premonitory shadows. And thus the phrase passes into the hands of, and is, so to say, baptized by, the Apostles, who fix its meaning in view of that fuller revelation of the world beyond the grave which was laid open to them by the Holy Spirit. St. Paul prays that the Corinthians may be 'blameless in the day of the Lord'; he trusts that God, who has begun a good work in his spiritual children at Philippi, 'will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ'; he hopes that, through the discipline of the Church exercised on the incestuous Corinthian, his 'spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord'; he warns the Thessalonians that 'the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night.' The expression is made at home in the New Testament, and it now has a clearly defined meaning; it points to a day beyond the limits of what we call time, when God will be first in the thoughts of all men.

2. It means, secondly, a time when all human things will be rated at their true value; when man's life, and all that belongs to it, will be seen in the light of the Infinite and the Eternal, and therefore in its relative insignificance. 'The day of God' thus implies a contrast and a catastrophe. It means that the days of man's earthly life, and all that concerns it, will have passed away. This is the idea of 'the day of the Lord' which Isaiah describes. Isaiah was living in a generation for which this present life was well-nigh its

all. Each feature of its civilization, each personal decoration, each possession, each dignity, each exercise of power, was inexpressibly dear to the men of that time. The trees and hills of Lebanon and Bashan furnish the imagery which clothes the burning words that predict the coming revelation of human insignificance. 'The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.'

Most men who have lived until middle life have experienced something that will enable them to understand this. They have gone on for years, without any shock to the even tenor of existence; and, insensibly, this visible world has become their all, or nearly so. Its striking scenes, its great personages, its objects of ambition, may easily so occupy the mind as to shut the unseen out from view. A spirit of slumber or stupefaction, such as St. Paul, appealing to prophecy, says took possession of the Jews, may have taken possession of them. They have fallen under the empire of Nature and of the bodily senses; and everything belonging to this world is seen in exaggerated proportions because they have lost sight of a higher. Now, a state of mind like this is abruptly broken in upon by a great trouble; by a loss of income, or loss of reputation, the death of a loved relative, or the ruin of health. Each of these may be a staggering blow to a man in certain circumstances; and one effect of such a shock may be to convince him that his former way of looking at life was a mistaken one. He has made too much of it, in detail and as a whole. He has attributed to it an importance and stability which is not borne out by experience: and he wakes up to see that there is another world beyond it, compared with which it is poor and worthless indeed. This is for him a 'day of the Lord'; and, in the light of it, he learns that 'all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.'

¶ In the summer of 1864, a mother, who had just returned home after an absence of three weeks, stood in the hall of a house in Cheltenham, waiting to greet her only daughter. There were several sons, but only this one daughter. Her name was Evangeline; she was the pet of the household. Full of joyous life, and almost boisterous vitality, she had flitted for a few years about the home, a bright and lovely vision of mirthful delight. On the day in question, eager to kiss her mother, she hurried from her room, reached the head of the staircase, and strained over the balustrade. She lost her balance, and fell. There was one shuddering cry; the next moment the child lay crushed and dying at her father's feet. The staircase was lofty; the marble floor was hard and cold. The little fairy with the golden hair, dressed all in white and in her best shoes, which she had put on to welcome her mother home, was carried into her room. There she lay, her long curls all stained and tangled, senseless, but struggling still against death. Recovery was impossible. But it was not till two in the morning that the convulsions ceased. Then all was still. Such was the call which first roused Josephine Butler to action.[1]

3. It means, once more, the day of a Universal Judgment. Such a day would be the day of God, if only because His moral attributes would be conspicuously displayed and satisfied. Thus our Lord says, 'Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.' Thus St. Peter says that unjust men are reserved 'unto the day of judgment to be punished.' Thus St. John is anxious that good Christians should have boldness in the Day of Judgment. And this character of the day is more fully explained when St. Paul tells the Romans that

[1] W. T. Stead.

it is a 'day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil.'

Certainly, God is always judging us. Moment by moment we live beneath His all-seeing eye; and He registers each act and word and thought, each movement of passion, each truancy of will, each struggle, by His grace, to live for Him, each victory 'over the craft and subtlety of the devil or man.' Moment by moment He is 'a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' He discerns; and as He discerns, He judges; He judges as we think, and feel, and speak, and act. And this life, too, is largely made up of the rewards which He bestows and of the penalties which He inflicts. His 'judgments are already in all the world,' although it may be hard to say which sufferings in our own lives or in the lives of others have been certainly penal, and which of them remedial or intended to educate for a higher life. But it is to Him, as our present Judge, that we pray with the Psalmist, 'Judge me, O Lord, according to thy righteousness'; or, 'Judge me, O Lord, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts'; or, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.'

God is always on the throne of judgment; but this does not prove that no time is coming when He will judge as never before. The predicted Day of Judgment will differ from the continuous judgment of the Divine Mind in two respects—in its method, and in its finality. It will be carried out, that Last Judgment, by the Man Christ Jesus in Person. 'For,' as the Judge Himself has told us, 'the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.' And so, as St. Paul taught the Athenians, God 'hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead.' And, accordingly, 'we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' And then 'every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.' Yes, Lord Jesus, 'we believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge.'

'Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God.' That is an account of the way in which a Christian should live. Does this description apply to us? Is our present relation of faith and love to our Lord Jesus Christ of such a character that we can look forward with humble confidence to being accepted in Him? Or are we whirling on through the advancing years of this brief life towards that tremendous future; closing our eyes as the flash of premonitory lightning breaks ever and anon from the heavens; stopping our ears to the roll of the distant thunders of the coming storm?[1]

Sooner or later: yet one day
We all must pass that way;

Each man, each woman, humbled, pale,
Pass veiled within the veil;

Child, parent, bride, companion,
Alone, alone, alone.

For none a ransom can be paid,
A suretyship be made:

I, bent by mine own burden, must
Enter my house of dust;

I, rated to the full amount,
Must render mine account.

When earth and sea shall empty all
Their graves of great and small;

When earth wrapped in a fiery flood
Shall no more hide her blood;

When mysteries shall be revealed;
All secrets be unsealed;

[1] H. P. Liddon.

When things of night, when things of shame,
Shall find at last a name,

Pealed for a hissing and a curse
Throughout the universe:

Then Awful Judge, most Awful God,
Then cause to bud Thy rod,

To bloom with blossoms, and to give
Almonds; yea, bid us live.

I plead Thyself with Thee, I plead
Thee in our utter need:

Jesus, most Merciful of Men,
Show mercy on us then;

Lord God of Mercy and of men,
Show mercy on us then.[1]

The Motives to Character.

2 Pet. iii. 13.—'But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.'

If to-day we are awake, we cannot help being among those of whom the writer says that they 'look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.'

But this near hope of the world—what ought it to be for us individually? It ought to be conscience and it ought to be character. The ideals of a generation may sometimes have been as bright as they are to-day; they have never had in them more of stimulus and elevation for the individual. Ours is an age in which the motives to character are more pure and urgent than they have ever been. It is not possible to fall into those delusions which in times past have so often followed upon the highest doctrines of religion and have dogged its purest intentions. There are no religious promises capable of being usurped by the baser passions. There is no peril of religion degenerating into a refined quality of selfishness. There is no possibility of contentment with the merely negative virtues, or of exhaustion in the work of political or ecclesiastical emancipation and reconstruction. But to-day the conscience of man feels more broadly than ever before that love is the fulfilling of the law; that service is the end of culture; and that the employment for the world of each faculty of our redeemed and sanctified manhood is, as it was to the prophets of the Old Testament, the one form of Divine election which is clear, practical and without mystery.

Nevertheless—for no form of religion can ever exist without the defects of its qualities—we, too, have our particular danger to guard against. The sphere of our religious hope is so extensive, so universal, that we are all in danger of missing the personal in it. The very fact that this hope has enlisted and sways so many of the great forces of our time, especially in politics and science, that it has inspired so many theories and created so many organizations, makes it possible that in our study and our use of the life to which it has quickened all these, we may forget what it requires of our individual characters. We cannot help being engaged intellectually with those religious hopes of ours. Philosophy, theoretic and practical, is everywhere busy with them. We cannot help feeling those hopes emotionally. They come upon us in the art, the music and the poetry of our time. But let us see that we permit them to work out their moral effects upon ourselves. Let us read ourselves in their light, and let them be to us for a conscience and for an inspiration to character.

1. For, first of all, the social problem is just the sum of individual sins in the past, as Christ Himself implies in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The impurity of society, the entanglement of society in many evil habits and customs, the accumulation of wrong and suffering which confronts her statesmanship and her charity, represent, in a large proportion at least, just so many definite opportunities missed, so many single trusts betrayed, so many particular oversights by individuals of definite cases of pain and want by the side of their own paths through life (witness the Priest and the Levite with the wounded man): just so many acts of cruelty,

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

passion and cowardice. Till each of us fulfils his own duties to society, and we all do our best with the cases of suffering by our own roadside, we shall only be multiplying the evils to meet which our social theories and charitable organizations are in these days being so confidently invented and constructed.

¶ Every man, in proportion as he is a true son of the Highest, feels that he *cannot* stand by, seeing misery and guilt within his reach, and say, 'It is no concern of mine'; he knows himself responsible for all the wrong *he might prevent,* as well as for all he may *positively do.*[1]

2. And again, we have come through a long period of intellectual and political experiments at reform; we have organized and achieved a large amount of careful observation and scientific arrangement of the social phenomena of our civilization. We are beginning to see how far political theories, and how far education, can carry us in the reform of society. The result may be a disappointment of those expectations which political reform and education so richly raised in the hearts of our fathers; but that only leaves us free to see how much more depends on the cultivation of individual morality; and how the ultimate factor in all social reform is character. This is the issue before the young men and women of to-day; and it presents itself more clearly and imperatively than it did to the conscience and experience of any previous generation. How are we to face it? Weakened by the self-indulgence and compromises of the years through which we are now passing? Or uncompromised, untainted, strong and ready to fight the evil which is without, because within we are pure, free and unafraid?

¶ He [Lord Guthrie] had no great faith in the effect of merely political measures to cure the evils of society. He would have subscribed to Goldsmith's well-known lines,

> How small of all that human hearts endure
> That part which laws or kings can cause or cure.

What was needed, he would have said, is not better laws but better men and women; and in so far as better laws can help to that end, no political party can be greatly trusted to enact them. . . . In 1911, speaking at Birkenhead at a gathering in the interest of the Boys' Brigade, he said: 'He was not a politician, but he did not think Fiscal Reform or Free Trade of any consequence whatever. He believed in national reform. He did not care whether the House of Lords and the House of Commons were both abolished. He did not want to improve the government of this country; he wanted the people to be such that they did not require to be told by Act of Parliament what to do or what not to do. Personally, he did not care whether we had a Monarchy or a Republic, whether we had one House or two—it did not matter a fig so long as we had the right kind of people who would be a law unto themselves, which was the ideal to aim at. If a young man would come and help in the Boys' Brigade, he would be doing more for the advancement and welfare of his country than if he talked himself black in the face either on the side of Free Trade or Tariff Reform.'[1]

3. We have been looking at our text as if it were only a hope. But it is more: it is a promise. We look for new heavens and a new earth, *according to His promises,* as one reading runs. And of these two especially are conspicuous.

(1) The first is a *command,* and naturally so; for no promise can have righteousness for its object, and not speak also in the imperative mood. Conversely, conscience is itself a promise. The Word of God, whether within our hearts or on the page of Scripture, never commands without also creating the power to fulfil the command. He who said, 'Let there be light, and there was light,' cannot say 'Thou shalt' to a man without in the very commandment starting within him at least the beginning of a sense of power to fulfil it. With God to command is to promise, and to promise is to create. Righteousness is the one certainty in our future, because it is the Divine obligation in our present.

[1] James Martineau.

[1] R. L. Orr, *Lord Guthrie,* 72.

(2) And if the first great promise of God be thus a command, the second is a *guarantee*. It lies in the life of His Son Jesus Christ, in whom we have seen, as in our flesh and against our temptations, righteousness already perfect and victorious over evil. It is here that Christianity distinguishes itself from optimism, which is only a temper without either conscience or experience. Mere optimism has no fear of God upon it springing from the imperative obligation of His commandments; no discipline resulting from that; no faith in the creative power of the Divine command; and above all, no memory of the great fact that God's will has been fully revealed and achieved in the character and work of Christ.

I peered within, and saw a world of sin;
  Upward, and saw a world of righteousness;
Downward, and saw darkness and flame
    begin
  Which no man can express.

I girt me up, I gat me up to flee
  From face of darkness and devouring
    flame:
And fled I had, but guilt is leading me
  With dust of death and shame.

Yet still the light of righteousness beams
    pure,
  Beams to me from the world of far-off
    day:—
Lord, Who hast called them happy that
    endure,
  Lord, make me such as they.[1]

Found.

2 Pet. iii. 14.—'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight.'

How ought men to live in the face of a hereafter and a sure and awe-inspiring judgment? With that towering possibility confronting us, which to the writer was a great and solemn certainty, with what kind of ambition ought we to direct and control our days? Let us mark the coolness and sanity of our author's reply. For there is nothing heated in his speech, nothing feverish, nothing sensational and fanatical. He does not tremble in paralysing fear, he does not maim his life by ascetic severities. Looking upon this superlative event, his life is cool and calm, full-toned and healthy. 'Seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight.' That is not counsel for men in their decrepitude, when their evening time is come and their sun is in the west, and the shout and struggle are over, and the fight and the feast are done. It is counsel for life in its morning and its pride, counsel which seeks the creation of a rich and consecrated character, full-blooded and effective all along the changing way. If there be a judgment, as there will be, if there be a morrow of crisis, as there surely will, then we may meet it with eager and fearless face 'in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight.'

Now let us look a little more closely at those features of the character which will stand triumphant in the judgment.

But first of all observe the word 'found.' That implies, if not search, at least investigation. It suggests the idea of the discovery of the true condition, character, or standing of a man, which may have been hidden or partially obscured before, and now, at last, is brought out clearly. With the same suggestion of investigation and discovery, the same phrase is employed in other places; as, for instance, when the Apostle Paul speaks about being 'found naked,' or as when he speaks about being 'found in him, not having mine own righteousness.' So, then, there is some process of examination or investigation, resulting in the discovery, possibly for the first time, of what a man really is.

Then note, 'found *in him*,' or, as the Revised Version has it, 'in his sight.' Then Christ is the Investigator, and it is before 'those pure eyes and perfect judgment' that they have to pass who shall be admitted into the new heavens and the new earth, 'wherein dwelleth righteousness.'

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

1. 'Found in peace.' Let us rid ourselves of the common interpretation of peace. In the ordinary mind peace is synonymous with quietness and rest. We are walking up Ludgate Hill at noon, and we are jostled by the hurrying and perspiring crowd, and we turn from the running multitudes into the cool quietness of St. Paul's Cathedral, and we are tempted to say to ourselves, How peaceful it is! Or we go into some little village church, hoary with the passage of many years, and with no sound disturbing the stillness excepting the occasional song of a bird which steals tenderly through the open window, and again we use the pregnant words, How peaceful! Or we go into the chamber of the dead, and we look at the body with the wrinkles wiped out, and the once-while weary limbs lying in undisturbed rest, and again we say, How peaceful it is! But these are not the symbols of Christian peace, however pertinently they may express the secret of stillness. Peace is not stillness, but a certain kind of movement. It is movement without friction; cog works into cog with perfect and noiseless harmony; everything moves without jar, and there is no grit in the wheels. Peace is not the absence of noise, but the absence of discord. When we dig to the very roots of the word we find its primary content is 'perfect joining.' Nothing works out of its place. Everything moves in everything else with delightful confluence. And this is peace, and therefore peace is harmony; it is the absence of the rebel, the extinction of strife. And so, if there is to be peace in my life, all the powers in my life must co-operate without friction and move in harmony under the supreme control of the larger will of God.

¶ Here is a musical instrument, the organ. It is a very complex instrument, containing I know not how many hundred parts. And there is a movement in the organ known as ciphering. And what is ciphering? It is the sounding of an organ pipe, in consequence of some derangement or maladjustment, independently of the action of the player. Harmony is dependent upon the obedience of each note to the organist's authority. If any note breaks out of its own accord the harmony is broken, and we are the victims of jarring discord. Now every man's individuality is like a complex organ. How manifold and varied are the component parts! And the harmony of the individual is dependent upon the co-operation of all his parts. And yet how frequently the harmony of the life is broken by the ciphering of a part. Some faculty is rebellious and breaks away from the control of the will. How often the player upon the instrument has to confess, 'I cannot control my temper!' or 'I cannot control my imagination!' or 'I cannot control my passions!' But there is this distinction between ourselves and the musical instrument. The organist at the key-board has no control over the ciphering; it is independent of him and works entirely away from his resources and his will. But the individual has resources at his disposal, offered to him by his Lord, resources found in the dynamics of grace, by which every faculty can be subjected to the holy purpose of our Lord. It is possible for the individual to be 'found in peace,' and for 'all that is within me' to bless God's holy name.[1]

Let us investigate a little more in detail this manifold organ of the individual self.

(1) There are my *powers of body*. These are to be 'found in peace'. They are to work in harmony with one another, and under the control of the sovereign will of God, and they are to move as common subjects of the King. 'Present your bodies.' We must bring our basal energies to the Lord, and have these bodily forces subdued to the higher harmonies, like the profound notes of the organ that give body and fullness to its tender and sweetening strains. 'Let the ape and tiger die,' sings Tennyson. But there is a better way. And the better way is to transform them. I do not want my passions annihilated; I want them turned to useful force. I want the sword changed into a ploughshare, and the spear into a pruning-hook, and I want the beast at the base harnessed to the imperial and holy purpose of God. If a man consecrates 'the ape and tiger' to the Lord, and these are brought into obedience under the Lord's control, the life will receive a tremendous driving-power, and every holy ambition will be pursued with

[1] J. H. Jowett.

almost violent zest. 'I keep my body under,' says the Apostle Paul. Every bodily desire is held in the leash, and all work together, and are 'found in peace.'

(2) There are my *powers of mind.* We speak of wandering thoughts, thoughts that are rebellious to the general dominion, and that steal away to forbidden fields. We have unrestrained imaginations, fancies that go off on their own charges and ask no question concerning the lands in which they roam. 'Bring every thought into captivity to Christ.' It is possible for all our mental powers to be 'found in peace.' We have more power over our thoughts than we frequently conceive. There is much reserve of authority which has not yet been exercised. We can refuse a thought expression, and that refusal enormously strengthens our self-control. 'Give no unproportioned thought its act.' Make every thought bow down to Jesus before you give it utterance! But if we still find that our sovereignty is ineffective we can refer our weakness to the Spirit. We can take these rebel thoughts and imaginings, and we can say to the Holy Spirit, 'These thoughts, my great Companion, are beyond me! I have no power to deal with them! I hand them over to Thee!' And marvellous is the efficacy of the reference! Marvellous is the re-arranging of this disordered world, and the subjection of the mental chaos into harmony and peace.

¶ It is worth while to remember that it is a practical impossibility to think of two different things at one and the same time. Often we seem to be doing this, but in reality we are thinking first of one thing and then the other, our thoughts alternating between the two ideas. This means that our minds have not the power to contain two different thoughts at any given moment. Therefore, if we determine to think of that which is good and uplifting, there remains no room for thoughts of an unworthy nature. Evil may be overcome with good in the realm of thought. To borrow an apt metaphor, we can shut down the sluices of our impure thoughts so that no more may enter and we can open the floodgates of the good channels so that worthier influences may enter into our hearts. There is such a thing as the expulsive power of a new affection. We cannot think of that which is good without being the better for it, and the more we rivet our attention upon the good, the pure, the true, the better are we able to resist thoughts and suggestions of an opposite nature. There is an interesting passage in Mr. Vachell's story, 'The Waters of Jordan.' In order to win Joy Vennable, Dr. Tisdale is tempted to tell a lie, 'And then the innumerable little acts of self-denial and self-sacrifice, the hardships patiently endured, the long hours of tireless ministration to others, *the fine thoughts and aspirations which had nourished his mind,* these, ten thousand strong, rose up and stood by him.' Fill the mind with the good, and the evil will be crowded out.[1]

(3) And there are my *powers of soul.* These are the superlative senses in my life. These also must be 'found in peace.' Our sense of right must not be allowed to join the rebel forces of mere expediency. Our sense of the sublime must not be permitted to career after degrading superstitions. Our highest powers must pay obeisance in the holy place, and acknowledge in awed communion the holiness of the Lord. All this is peace, for this is harmony, the powers of body and of mind and of soul all co-operating in producing the music of the spheres, the melody which is well-pleasing unto God. And this is the character with which one can confidently meet the day of judgment. 'Give diligence that ye may be found in peace.'

2. Now turn to the second of the characteristics of the triumphant life: 'found . . . without spot.' Let us mark the significance of the word. It describes a life distressed by no infirmity and corrupted by no disease. It is neither lame nor defiled. Our God desires the entire life, and He resents a defective offering. He wants 'a lamb without spot.' None of our powers is to be made infirm by disease, and none is to be rendered diseased by abuse. Is not this a sane and reasonable teaching? Surely this man's mind is in no degree impaired by the spectacle of coming judgment! His ambition is to be diligent—

[1] C. F. Walpole, *The Building of Personality,* 61.

to present himself healthy, with every part of his being in working order. We may vary in the quality of our endowments, but there need be no variety in their purity. One man may have ten talents, and another man only one, but in both instances the life can be perfectly clean. One man's endowment may be as that of a cathedral organ, while another's may be commonplace as an ordinary harmonium, but both can be kept in perfect purity, no part corrupted, and every part sounding out the obedient note.

3. And the third characteristic of the triumphant character is described in the succeeding phrase, 'without blame.' Is that possible? I may get my body under, and I may succeed, by the grace of God, in freeing every part of my being from infirmity and disease, but is it within the bounds of possibility that I can stand in the judgment 'without blame'? I think of my life. I retrace its steps. I mark its deliberate rebellions, its sins of selfishness and desire, its injustices in speech and deed, its disloyalties and secret treacheries. How can such a life ever be found 'without blame'? And yet it is gloriously possible. It is the very evangel of grace that, on the day of judgment, men whose lives were once defiled can stand before the Almighty, and no word of blame or rebuke shall fall upon their ears. They shall come to judgment, but there shall be no condemnation. 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.'

¶ I saw a man a little while ago with the marks of his old rebellion still seated in his face; but behind that disfigured countenance there was the illuminating presence of the light of life, and that man shall stand in the judgment 'without blame.' But this can be possible only when the life is lost 'in Christ.' We are regarded and judged as being in Him. What He is we are, for as He is we shall one day assuredly become. 'Our life is hid with Christ.' It may be only poor as yet, and the footprints of the beast may be scarcely erased from our life, but one day we are to be manifested in His beauty. It fills me with amazement that I, once a vagrant, and bearing about with me signs of my degeneracy, shall one day 'walk in His likeness.' Yes, and those old days, those pitiably blighted days, are never to be named by Him in whose holy presence we are all to stand. 'I will remember them against thee no more for ever.'[1]

Wresting the Scriptures.

2 Pet. iii. 16.—'Which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.'

Yes, and to the destruction of others also. When Innocent III. was giving to the Abbot of Citeaux his infamous advice to entrap the Count of Toulouse to his ruin, he wrote, 'We advise you, according to the precepts of the Apostle, to use cunning in your dealings with the Count of Toulouse, treating him with a wise dissimulation, in order that the other heretics may be more easily destroyed.' 'According to the precepts of the Apostle!'—and indeed, says the historian, 'it is remarkable that when the Roman Pontiffs, especially Gregory VII. and Innocent III., had any pernicious design to recommend, they were lavish in their appeals to Scripture, as if they had studied the Bible merely to find an excuse for sacrilege.'

1. Scripture is 'wrested' through *ignorance*. We smile when we hear of unlettered Roman Catholics supposing that the second verse of the 24th Psalm means 'Thou hast founded the world,' not 'super maria,' upon the seas, but 'super Maria,' on the Virgin Mary; or of ignorant Calvinists seriously arguing that they need not repent, because 'the gift and calling of God are without repentance'; or of the English Archbishop before the Reformation who argued that the authority of St. Peter and his successors was implied by 'Thou shalt be called Kephas,' 'because we all know,' he said, 'that Kephas' (which he confused with *kephalē*) 'means a head'; yet a similar ignorance is so common that a truly astonishing amount of what passes as scriptural quotation

[1] J. H. Jowett.

is a mere play on words. It is not only that the evidence of the MSS is ignored, but also that preachers and controversialists often shut their eyes to the first principles of right translation. Who has not heard the text 'Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men' used as a plea for lurid and Apocalyptic pictures, though the text means only 'Because I fear God, I am free from double dealing.' Such errors may be comparatively harmless when they are used to sanction some piece of ritual, like the mistranslation of 'At the name of Jesus every knee should bow'; but it is more serious when 'Take no thought for the morrow,' which means 'Do not be over anxious for to-morrow,' is made the excuse for an immoral carelessness; or as when the most common acts of Christian courtesy towards those from whom we differ are denounced by the text, 'A man that is a heretic reject' by those whose whole lives are factious self-assertions of error. And most serious of all is it when a text is made to cause deep and needless agony to human souls. 'He found no place for repentance though he sought it earnestly with tears'—that text, we are told, was to the early struggles of John Bunyan 'like a flaming sword, barring to him the way of the tree of life.' How was it that there was none to tell him that, even if the text do not imply 'no room to change his father's decision,' still one text, were it never so plain, can never give the lie to that majestic unanimity of Scripture which has proclaimed to us that 'All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men,' and that

> Who with repentance is not satisfied
> Is not of heaven nor earth.

2. Then, again, what a source of endless mischief is a rude and blind *literalism*. Is it needful to point out that 'Sell all that thou hast' was not a sufficient ground for establishing the mendicant orders; that 'Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity' was not, as the Rabbis made it, a malediction on Church bells? that, when John Bunyan was tormented by his want of faith in being unable to make the road puddles dry at a word, he was mistaking metaphor for prose? 'This is my body'—oh! the strange theories of transubstantiation, and transaccidentation, and consubstantiation; oh! the volumes and libraries of controversy; oh! the burnings, and hatred and schisms, and recriminations with which men have fought with each other, and anathematized each other, about those words of love! Is there no one to say that they are but an application of that simple and forcible figure of Jewish thought by which 'eating' was but a type of closest incorporation—by which they said that Moses on Sinai fed on the music of the spheres, and that the just eat of the glory of the Shechinah?

3. And if literalism be dangerous, may not *allegorizing* be made even more so? Is a text never to have its own proper meaning? Are we always to be packing into it a number of other meanings which it cannot by any possibility have originally conveyed? How perverse is the remark of St. Jerome, that to trace the literal sense is to eat the dust like the serpent! What is to become of the holy simplicity of Scripture if Jacob is to be made a type of Christ in 17 particulars, and Moses in 40, and Joseph in 44? And yet the Rabbis and the Fathers, and the Schoolmen, and the Reformers, and the Puritans, and Anglican divines are full of these allegorizings, and spiritualizings, and typologies. Read the commentaries on the Parables, and you will see to what tasteless riot this false system of exegesis has run. Happy for us if it were merely tasteless: happy if it had not led to masses of inferences of most false theology. It cannot be too loudly proclaimed that, except so far as this method is permitted as a dubious play of fancy to such as like it, it should be utterly discouraged. It has not, it ought not to have, the faintest shadow of binding authority. It is to reduce the Bible to one vast sea of uncertainty, in which anything may mean everything. It is to make the text but reflect every hue of fancy and every shade of belief in those who assume the office of interpreter. When Archbishop Sancroft made 'Sirs, ye should not have loosed from Crete' the text of a sermon against the dissenters, because Crete was an Episcopal Church, or

when the Jacobites referred to the pale horse of the Apocalypse as a taunt against the white horse of the House of Hanover, they were not in earnest: but Innocent III. was in deadly earnest when he made 'Lord, here are two swords' a sign that he possessed the temporal as well as the spiritual authority; or spoke of himself as the greater light to rule the day, and the German Emperor as the lesser light to rule the night. Such a style of exegesis is but a survival of Rabbinism when it had run to its last dregs of feeble decadence.

4. Again, look at the ravages wrought in the use of Scripture by utter *neglect of the context*, by making its isolated words the talisman to conjure with, while we profanely ignore their proper application. 'There is nothing secret that shall not be revealed'; 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be'; 'Secret things belong unto God'; 'I have trodden the wine press alone'; 'No man can redeem his brother'; 'He shall drink of the brook by the way'; neither these texts, nor scores of others, have originally the sense in which they are daily quoted. Except in so far as inaccurate use of Scripture is always to be deprecated, those misquotations may do no great mischief; we have only to remember that though the words are those of prophet or evangelist it is the 'speaker or preacher who is standing behind them, and adapting them to his own purpose.' But it is very mischievous when texts so misapplied are made the basis of the bulwark of sectarian dogmas. 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint'—how often has the text been used as a proof of what is called the doctrine of 'total corruption,' whereas it merely describes the results of fruitless punishment. 'Which among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' Is it honest to quote that in proof of endless torments, when the sole reference is to the Assyrian invasion? 'Where the tree falleth, there it shall lie.' Is it not intolerable that that verse should still be relied on as a proof that there cannot be for any sinner any gleam of hope beyond the grave, when, in the first place, the metaphor, even if it had to do with the future at all, could not possibly contain the inference, and when, in the second, it has not so much as the faintest reference to the future, but is merely an exhortation to be diligent and trustful amid the unknown workings of the Providence of God.

5. And lastly, let us be sternly on our guard against that *inferential method*—that 'ever-widening spiral *ergo* out of the narrow aperture of single texts' against which Coleridge warned the Church so long ago. Surely the recklessness of this method ought long ago to have been exposed by the enormous differences of opinion urged out of the same text by different expositors. Take, for instance, such a passage as the parable of the Unjust Steward, where in the steward some have seen the Pharisees, some the Publicans, some Judas Iscariot, some Satan, some the Apostle Paul; and one modern writer (such is the boundless futility of which exegesis is capable though it has often claimed for itself such arrogant infallibility) argues that by the unjust steward the Lord meant Himself! Could we have a better proof of our right to refuse all adherence, all allegiance, and in very many instances all shadow of respect, to the attempts which are still daily made to force 'the senses of men upon the words of God, the special senses of men upon the general words of God, and laying them upon men's consciences together under the equal penalty of death and damnation'? The general teaching of Scripture on all things necessary is plain and clear enough, and if we were not all as narrow, and as fierce, and as ignorant as we are, we might all draw water together in peace from those wells of salvation. But if we are called upon to believe the doctrine of Papal infallibility by inferences from the text, 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not'; and the doctrine of works of supererogation from 'That which is behind of the afflictions of Christ'; and from the words 'predestination' and 'elect,' all the arid scholasticisms and ponderous afterthoughts of a pitiless and repellent theology, then in the name of honest and true learning, no less than in the name of all the best instincts of our human hearts, it is time to protest that to enforce such inferences from

Scripture is to be of those who, because they are unlearned and unstable, wrest Scripture, wrench it, strain it as with a windlass, stretch it upon the rack, to wring out of it, not *its* meaning, but their own meanings, to the perdition of the faith and the happiness of mankind. They wrest and rack it to their own perdition—aye, and still more to that of others. 'Perdition,' 'reprobation,' and all that they involve—it is ever in this direction that men pervert the Scriptures most; and they dwell so much on their stretching of the metaphor that 'God is a consuming fire,' that they have never realized the fact that it is written again that 'God is love.' [1]

Falling.

2 Pet. iii. 17.—'Beware lest ye also . . . fall from your own stedfastness.'

Words of this kind, that warn us of the tendency of our souls to drift out of their own resoluteness, appeal to most men. We all know what it is that they are speaking about. We know that many a good thing has died out of these lives of ours. Many a fair morning has dawned upon our soul, when we girded our loins in the fresh morning air and promised ourselves some high and enduring enterprise. But how seldom did we maintain throughout the day the morning spirit, the morning joy!

1. We know some ways in which this thing happens. When a man, however imperfectly or obscurely, admits Christ into his life, he knows that he has admitted One who will compel him to change his manner of life in many respects. The question is whether the man will be willing to do what Christ urges him to do. It is not possible for any of us to go on very long without coming to a point where we must either obey Christ or take our own course. It is at such a point that we are confirmed or we fall away. At such a point we know quite well that it must be one thing or the other; and sometimes when one becomes aware of this, rather than give up his liberty as he calls it, he refuses Christ.

[1] F. W. Farrar.

[7] ¶ Jerome K. Jerome has a story of a man 'who lost his own self; who saw himself slowly die, and knew that he was dead for ever.' The story is as follows:—

'Once upon a time there lived a poor boy. He had little in common with other children. He loved to wander by himself, to think and dream all day. . . . Ever amid the babel of the swarming street, would he hear strong, silent voices, speaking to him as he walked, telling him of the work he would one day have entrusted to his hands—work for God such as is given to only the very few to do, work for the helping of God's children in the world, for the making of them stronger and truer and higher—and he would raise his boyish hands to Heaven and pray that he might ever prove worthy of the trust. . . .

And so the years passed, and he became a man, and his labour lay ready to his hand.

And then a foul demon came and tempted him—the demon that has killed many a man before, that will kill many a great man yet—the demon of worldly success. And the demon whispered evil words in his ear, and—God forgive him!—he listened.

'Of what good to *you*, think you, will it be, your writing mighty truths, and noble thoughts? What will the world pay for *them?* What has ever been the reward of the earth's greatest teachers and poets—the men who have given their lives to the best service of mankind—but neglect, scorn, and poverty? . . . Work for the world, and the world will pay you promptly; the wages the gods give are long delayed.'

And the demon prevailed over him, and he fell!

And, instead of being the servant of God, he became the slave of man. And he wrote for the multitude what they wanted to hear, and the multitude applauded and flung money at him, and as he would stoop to pick it up, he would grin and touch his cap, and tell them how generous and noble they were. . . .

Thus he became rich, and famous, and great; and had fine clothes to wear and rich foods to eat, as the demon had promised him, and servants to wait on him, and horses, and carriages to ride in; and he would have been

happy—as happy as such things can make a man—only that at the bottom of his desk there lay (and he had never had the courage to destroy them) a little pile of faded manuscripts written in a boyish hand, that would speak to him of a poor lad who had once paced the city's feet-worn stones, dreaming of no other greatness than that of being one of God's messengers to men, and who had died, and had been buried for all eternity, long years ago.'

This story is steeped in the brine of tears. Many, many, alas! can say, 'I have heard the voice of God calling me, but I followed the world, *and now I am what I am.*'[1]

2. Once again, many of those who receive the gospel and cast themselves upon Christ do so in an hour of strong emotion. Our sins have been lying heavy upon us and we look to Christ out of a sore and troubled heart. Out of the depths we cry to Him and He hears us. He composes our fears. He lifts up our head. But time passes. We begin to forget the fearful pit and the miry clay out of which He delivered us. We may go on to think that things were never so bad with us as we imagined. That we were needlessly sensitive, needlessly excited. It was in an agony that we clung to Christ: and now that the agony is past our hold on Christ may relax.

Perhaps the most painful incident in the New Testament is the denial, thrice repeated, by Peter of the Lord. We have been familiar with it from our childhood and that breaks the force of the story now. But if we could read the words for the first time, they would fill us with consternation. They would perhaps even injure our faith, raising a doubt whether the human heart could ever in any circumstances be capable of true steadfastness. A man at one moment so passionately loyal to Jesus that he drew his sword on one who laid hands upon Him—an hour or so afterwards denying with the same passion that he had ever known Christ. It is not for us to say hard things of that disciple, but to learn humility and caution from his sudden fall. To learn also how it came to pass; for when we look carefully into the story, the reason seems to be given us.

We read there that when Jesus was taken that night, Peter took advantage of the darkness to slip away from His side. We read that 'Peter followed him afar off.' That was unwise: it was to encourage apostasy. That was not the way to face the crisis which he knew was coming. We know what he ought to have done, though we ourselves shall need the full measure of the grace of God to enable us to do it in our own circumstances. He should have kept close by the side of Jesus. He should have committed himself in such a way that it would have been impossible for him to retreat. He should have cut off his own line of retreat. He should have walked by the side of Jesus to the judgment hall. It was because he had left His side that he could deny Him.

Well, let us learn wisdom from his fall. We do not know what trials of our faith, what tests of our loyalty to Jesus Christ are awaiting us: but we know that life is full of them, and we know the incurable weakness of our hearts. Let us be anxious if we find ourselves unfaithful to Christ in the least thing, even in some obscure issue. For if it be true that he who is faithful in that which is least is faithful in that which is greatest, it is also true and for our admonition that he who permits himself some private but real disloyalty to Christ without immediate self-rebuke or repentance is allowing forces to gather and reside within him which will bring about a sheer and, it may be, an irreparable fall. A small disloyalty unrepented of cuts away the root of our life from Christ. It only requires a wind, it only requires the circumstances, to dash our entire profession to the ground.

'Did I not see thee in the garden?' 'Yea,
When the sun drew the spices from the flowers
And flung them, stintless, to the rapturous wind,
When earth was breathing redolent, and her breath
Was warm and wondrous thro' the lips that smiled:

[1] J. Burns.

When He walked in the garden I was there;
I walked with Him; thou mayst have seen
me then.'

'Did I not see thee when the questioning stars
Were marshalled, one by one, to watch thro'
night,
When a faint shiver stirred the faltering
trees
And waked to wondering the listless earth?
In that hush'd garden at the cool of day,
He walked serene amid the lilies dim.
He walked alone; yet thou, methinks, wert
there.'

But now the garden calls for Him in vain;—
The judgment floor is chill beneath the feet
That tread its marble as a path to power—
And He is on His trial. Art thou here?
Is there no sprig of sweetness in thine hand
Culled from that garden in the crucial morn?
'I know Him not: I do not know the man.' [1]

The Conditions of Growth.

2 Pet. iii. 18.—'Grow in grace.'

What are the conditions of growth? Let us think. Let us go into our gardens.

1. Before there can be growth there must be life. Pebbles do not grow. I might bury a pebble in any kind of condition, and allow it to remain a millennium of days; it would not add to its stature or increase its being by a hair's breadth. Growth presupposes life; before we can acquire a tree we require a seed. But to have the seed is not enough. I have in one of the drawers in my study a little handful of seeds which were brought to me from the island of Ceylon. They are undoubted germs of life, but there they remain in my drawer, and they have not even begun to unpack their little trunks and reveal to me their shining robes. What do they need?

(1) They need suitable conditions. I am not quite sure whether I can create the conditions. I almost think that before they will unfold their treasure I shall require 'the spicy breezes' that 'blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle.' I may need a special kind of soil which I have not the means to provide. But even if I can provide suitable conditions the development may not proceed.

(2) The conditions must also be available. The seed must be able to lay hold of them. It would be no use surrounding me with suitable food if I had no powers and no limbs with which to lay hold of it. The seed must have subtle powers of apprehension. In some strange way it must be able to stretch out mystic hands and appropriate the suitable food. But even then the growth may be only scanty and transient. More exacting conditions are required.

(3) They must be adequate conditions. I have sown some wheat in a saucer. The soil was congenial. The resources were available. But they were insufficient. The growth proceeded for a little while, and then, capital becoming exhausted, the tender little shoots were thrown into bankruptcy, and drooped in consequent ruin. It is a necessity of all growth: in every form of life the income must exceed expenditure, the forces of nutrition must more than counterbalance the ravages of waste.

2. Now let us take this manifold analogy and allow it to shed its light upon the mysterious problem of spiritual growth. Before we talk about growth we must be sure about life. Progress is preceded by birth. Before we can attain to trees it is needful to become seeds. I will assume that this all-essential step has been taken, that we have become 'the seed of God.' 'He that believeth on the Son hath . . . life!' That is the supreme beginning. That is the conversion into spiritual saplings, into 'babes in Christ.' What now are the conditions of growth? We require suitable and adequate supplies of nutrition. And is it not just this all-adequate provision that the Bible so exultantly proclaims? Let anyone take the Book of God, and cull from its well-stocked pages all the heartening promises beginning with, 'I will feed,' and he will obtain a wonderful conception of the wealthy providence that surrounds us. Let him move slowly and read expectantly through the New

[1] O. E. L., *Something*, 7.

Testament, pausing at every reference to the glorious ministry of grace, and he will be filled with wonder at the plenteousness of his resources. Grace is not only pardon and cleansing: it is our meat and drink! The supply is never exhausted! The well knows no drought; the heavenly meal is never consumed. 'Grace abounding!' It enswathes us in our infancy. Its fullness remains in old age. When old Mr. Honest went down into the waters of death, the last words he was heard to speak as he went bravely into the depths were these, 'Grace reigns!' The provision is all-sufficient, 'the unsearchable riches of grace.'[1]

The Essentials of Growth.

2 Pet. iii. 18.—'Grow in grace.'

If a plant is to come to maturity, it will require light, it will require heat, it will require moisture, it will require air. These four things that are essential to the plant life are also essential to the Divine life within the heart of the individual.

(1) *Light.*—Here is a plant. Hide it away from the rays of the sun in some dark place. See how sickly and stunted, how unhealthy becomes its appearance. See how it ever tries to creep in the direction of the faintest little ray of light. Bring it out into the light; plant it in your garden; let the rays of the sun pass through one strata after another of atmosphere until it touches the little leaves of the plant, and see how it preserves its green colour, grows healthy, and arrives at maturity.

Now just so it is with the Divine life within us. If it is to grow and expand we must be light-lovers; we must be like that plant, ever turning our hearts in the direction of the light. Whence does it come? From the Sun of Righteousness. Through one medium after another it finds access within—through the preaching of God's Word, through the experiences of Christ's people, through the medium of the inspired page. It is with this thought in his mind that the Psalmist says: 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.'

¶ Our Christian life, if we have any, sprang into existence, either directly or indirectly in response to the light sent us from that source which 'lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' Our Christian growth will be in proportion to the degree of illumination received from the same source. This is the sun which alike woos the confidence of the tiny sprout of religion when first it dares to venture from the shelter of its seed, and brings a flush upon the ripening fruit that crowds upon the topmost limb as though to catch and to reflect the earliest signal of the coming dawn. The knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Centuries have passed since He was on the earth. Philosophy has been at work in every generation that has followed; science has investigated facts without number; morality has experimented through every range of practice; priest-craft has sought out all possible forms to cultivate piety; but neither philosophy nor science, nor morality nor priest-craft has ever formed one principle controlling developments in nature, securing order in society, or promoting purity in religion at real variance with the principles and practices of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, as the world advances, the philosopher finds fresh truth suggested by His utterances, the scientist new hypotheses; each nation a higher standard for liberty; each church a holier impulse for conduct.[1]

(2) *Heat.*—Another essential for the growth of the plant is heat. A plant may receive light, but light rays are cold rays, and unless heat rays accompany them there will not be true development. There will be only partial development. Whence come the heat rays? From the same source as the light rays. All along those visible rays of light from the sun to the plant there are certain invisible rays whose presence we can prove only by other means than that of the eye. They are heat rays. They are hid from observation by the eye, but they can be felt; and it is these heat rays falling upon a plant that enable it to expand its cells and develop. Hence such a plant as

[1] J. H. Jowett.

[1] G. L. Raymond.

the sunflower, which requires a great amount of heat to bring forth its seed, rises early in the morning, lifts its broad surface to the sun, and follows it in its course all day, in order that it may receive its genial rays. It twists its head upon its stalk that it may bask in that which is necessary to bring it to maturity.

Now, just as the natural plant requires heat, so does the spiritual plant within. We must have heat as well as light. Whence are we to obtain heat? From the same source as we get light—from the Sun of Righteousness. Day by day, if we are to obey the injunction of the text, we must have our hearts open towards heaven. We must be like the disciples of the Eastern Sabbath evening, when they walked with Christ by the way, and He opened unto them the Scriptures. The one said to the other, 'Did not our hearts burn [grow fervent] within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?' Yes, if we are to obey the injunction of the text, we will seek to walk as side by side with Christ, in order that in His heat our hearts may be warmed; in order that in the presence of that love of His we may learn to love, and so be enabled to grow in grace—in those affections and experiences that constitute the Divine manhood.

¶ As Wesley, in October 1738, walked from London to Oxford, he chanted the words:

Talk with me, Lord, Thyself reveal,

and the way became for him the Emmaus Road.

He never truly caught sight of that road while in Georgia. He knew then the story of those who consciously walked it; but it was a tale of others, not of himself. The Lord walked with him on the roads of Georgia, but Wesley's eyes were holden. To know the glory of this walk we must reach the home at Emmaus. Wesley journeyed many years before he entered that dwelling-place, and even then went reluctantly to it. 'In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street.' Here the divine love burned within him like a flame—he had reached Emmaus. 'About a quarter before nine I felt my heart strangely warmed.' Not once only did he feel that 'Emmaus' experience. It was daily his early morning walk. The entry in his diary, which appears with such amazing regularity—'4, prayed'—might be truly translated, 'Walked to Emmaus.' He was a flaming evangelist, and the fires of his love never died down to white ashes, because day by day they were kindled anew at the fires of divine love. Thus the flame grew higher and hotter.[1]

(3) *Moisture.*—In plant life there must be not only light and heat, there must be moisture. If we look abroad upon the face of Nature in summer-time, when there has been a long-continued drought, and see how burnt, and bare, and brown, and unhealthy all the fields are, we say, 'What is wrong?' There is light and there is heat here.' Yes, but there is need of the baptism of the genial shower. Let the shower come and fall upon the burnt earth, and fall about the tiny rootlets of the plants, and dissolve the food that is in the earth, and make it fit so that the little mouths may absorb the nutriment, and then see what a change. How fair and how beautiful Nature becomes. Before, it was burnt and unhealthy, but now it is green—a living green; life is on every hand.

Now just so it is with regard to the spiritual life in the individual. There must be the baptism of the genial shower; there must be the coming of that moisture that will dissolve the food, and make it fit for our spiritual aspiration, else we will not grow. There must be the operating of the Holy Spirit of God upon the Church, upon the individual, or we shall not have a healthy Church life, a healthy spiritual manhood. And God has promised what our hearts need. Has He not said: 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thing offspring'? Has He not said: 'I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. . . . They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine'? Yes; the Holy Spirit comes as an answer to prayer, and takes of the things that are Christ's, and shows them unto us;

[1] E. B. Brash, *The Pilgrim's Way*, 26.

even that Spirit which knoweth what is the mind of God reveals unto us the mind of the Father.

I will away by secret winding stair
To my closed garden whither angels come,
Where the marred spirit, now unmanned and numb,
May be recovered from her dark despair,
Peace giving healing light for pitiless glare,
Faith bringing vision to the downcast eyes,
Love heaping up the heart's spent treasuries,
Till by God's angels tended and made fair,
I mount again into life's hurrying street,
Strengthened to serve my Lord with shining feet.[1]

(4) *Air.*—There is still another essential for the development of plant life—a pure atmosphere. We see in the suburbs of our cities, in front of some of the houses, shrubs—very stunted, unhealthy, sickly-looking things they are, brown and scorched. We stand in the presence of one of them, and if we are lovers of Nature our heart is sad. We say: 'What is wrong here? There is light, there is heat, there is moisture. Why is this thing not growing? Why is it consumptive like that?' Ah! there are impurities in the atmosphere that mar the health of its little lungs. They get in so that it cannot breathe aright, and hence this stunted appearance. Take that same shrub and plant it on one of our hill slopes, where it may be fanned by the breath of God's winds, and smiled upon by God's suns, and where the morning dews may fall around and upon it, and then notice what a change takes place! The unhealthy appearance goes, and in every leaf and stem there is a living force.

Now just so it is with our Christian life. If we are to grow in grace we must live in a pure atmosphere. We often look around us in Church life, and we find people who are hearers of God's Word only at long distances, and who forget to assemble themselves together; and they are very good people in the main, and we often wonder how they can maintain anything like the profession of the Divine life that they attained to long before. They associate so much with the world and with the world's ways, and we know what that means. Two cannot walk together unless they are agreed. A man becomes like the individual with whom he associates. Tennyson says, 'as the husband is the wife is'; in some cases as the wife is the husband is. We become like those with whom we associate. The weaker becomes subordinate to the stronger. Now, in regard to our spiritual life, we cannot grow if we are associating all the time with the world, and following out its ways. We must be lovers of the society of God's people; lovers of God's house; above all, lovers of prayer.

¶ The water spider has its home fathoms down below the surface of the wave. This is the way it makes its home. It goes up to the surface, it inhales a large quantity of air, and then it dives away down, deep, deep, to the place where it thinks it would like to have its home, and it breathes out this atmosphere and in this little chamber it lives and goes on with its work from day to day, untouched by the element around. A beautiful illustration of how you and I can go through the world without letting it come immediately in contact with our better nature and better self. Let us begin the day with prayer to God. A man who has not time to have a few words of conversation with his heavenly Father ere he begins the work of the day, ere he goes down to the city—that man is not putting himself in the position that he should be in when he hears the voice of the Apostle saying, 'But grow in grace.'[1]

[1] W. C. Braithwaite.

[1] W. S. Stewart.

GROWTH.

2 Pet. iii. 18.—'Grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

Eph. iv. 14, 15.—'That we may be no longer children . . . but . . . may grow up in all things unto him, which is the head, even Christ.'

1 Cor. iii. 6.—'I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.'

Prov. iv. 18.—'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.'

Hos. xiv. 5-7.—'I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.'

I.

GROWTH.

1. *The idea of growth is fundamental in all serious modern thought.*—It is a commonplace to refer to the change in our outlook which the idea of evolution has effected. Everything that has a history we now view from the standpoint of that idea. We think of the whole universe as in process of development. We judge of a thing by what it is capable of becoming. The older static view has given place to a dynamic view. Our attitude is teleological; that is, we fix our eyes on the goal or end to which the universe is moving. Lord Balfour has declared that 'no century has seen so great a change in our intellectual apprehension of the world in which we live' as the nineteenth. That is, he maintains that a new conception has been reached, which stands in the same relation to our age as that of Galileo and Bacon to the seventeenth century. This fundamental change in our point of view is quite sufficiently expressed by the term 'evolution.' Renan refers to its radical character when he says: 'It consists in the substitution of the category of evolution for the category of being; formerly everything was considered as being; people spoke of law, of religion, of politics, of poetry in an absolute fashion. Now, everything is considered as in process of formation.' We *are* not, we *are becoming*, and nothing is final, only proximate and moving towards finality.

2. *Growth is a vital as distinguished from a mechanical process.*—It partakes, therefore, of the mystery which envelops the essence of life wherever it appears; it is inexplicable and unresolvable. Its most obvious characteristic is the fact that it is an unfolding, an expansion from within, a development of some germinal form; it proceeds not by additions from without, but by evolution from within. The seed so entirely disappears in the process which it sets in motion that it would never be connected with the fully grown plant but for the reproductive function which binds the last stage to the first. But, despite the disparity between the seed and the plant, the acorn and the oak, all the possibilities of these marvellous unfoldings are wrapped up in the insignificant germs. Nature makes distinct and highly organized types and these types are determined by the germ; but the germ reaches out and fulfils its potentialities of growth and life only as it is nourished and enriched by the elements which surround it. The process involves two great factors: a vital germ at the centre, which has the instinct or faculty of selection; and soil, air, light, heat, and moisture, which minister to and make possible this unfolding. The secret of this preservation of the type in such a vast complexity of conditions is found in the law under which each living germ selects and appropriates those elements only which are vitally related to its own structure and quality.

Wherever life holds its own in the world growth takes place; life and growth are everywhere bound together so closely that it is impossible to see the one without seeing the other; for life appears to have no other way of manifesting itself. From the seed to the fruit in which the plant fulfils its nature and function, from the egg to the perfected animal, from the primordial cell to the complete man,

the process by which life evolves its potency and discloses its aims is the process of growth.

3. *The essence of human life is growth.*—Man is an immortal being, and immortality necessarily carries with it the thought of perpetual growth or development. If I am to be immortal as I am this minute, I prefer extinction. But, as a matter of fact, if there is one thing more than another which is capable of growth it is personality. The value of a human being lies in what he may become. What interests us in the growth of a child is his possibilities. In the child are latent powers and capacities which, if proper opportunity is afforded, may ripen to results which we are quite unable to forecast. And a person, we feel, has never reached the limits of his growth during his human life: he is only, we feel, preparing for a further stage. Browning says well in *Cleon,* 'Why stay we on the earth, unless to grow?' And the essential part of the growth is the *spiritual.* But if we are to have effective spiritual growth—growth in our relation with God—we must have effectual *moral* growth also, growth in our relations with our fellowmen; and in order that either of these shall have its fullest freedom we need full *mental* growth—growth in our relation with thoughts and ideas, and full *physical* growth—growth in our relation with things.

Physical growth is rather outwith our scope at the present. It is enough to be reminded that, as Walt Whitman says, 'a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels'—how much more the human body; and, further, that our body is the temple of God the Holy Ghost, and though we may worship heartily in a filthy garret, God's temple is better to be seemly and well cared for. It is true that brilliant examples may exist of men triumphing for a time over natural defects and constitutional maladies; but, as a rule, the active work of life is done by those who have not only mental but bodily vigour. Such is the intimate connexion between body and soul, such the organization of the nervous system, that a sound mind, healthy in all its functions, is seldom found out of a sound and equally healthy body. Seldom, indeed, is the energy of a William of Orange, or a Nelson, or a St. Arnaud, associated with a feeble and debilitated frame. Here and there occurs a notable exception to the general rule of humanity, but it is such an exception as proves the rule, and we are safe to admit that the finest and highest types of growth will include the highest possible perfection of physical development. But here we must leave this point, and pass on to discuss in more detail the next stage, mental and intellectual growth.

II.

MENTAL GROWTH.

Many well intentioned Christians deny the need of mental growth—indeed some of them seem rather to suspect it. They quote with satisfaction, 'He has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.' Precisely: the 'wise and prudent' were satisfied: they had stopped growing. The babes were growing as fast as they could.

There are many among us who virtually say, 'We consider ourselves justified in going to sleep if doctrine is preached to us; the intellectual difficulties of our time we do not care to trouble ourselves with; critical questions must be left to scholars, and although there are whole books of the Bible we do not know the meaning of, we can get along without knowing these things.' What lies at the root of this? What do these persons mean when they clamour for a simple gospel? Sometimes they have no meaning, and only repeat a phrase which has a pious sound; but when they have a meaning, probably there is, as usual, a mixture of good and evil, of truth and error, in their mind. In so far as they proclaim that it is a very simple gospel that suffices to bring men into connection with Christ they declare a most important truth. But if they mean that, being in Christ, the Christian mind may go to sleep and think no more and add no knowledge to that which suffices to introduce to Christ, they are in grievous error. In order to advance in Christian strength we must advance in Christian knowledge, and distinguish between steadfast-

ness in the faith and stolidity in the faith, between a love for old truth and a hatred or indifference to new truth and new duty.

Religion embraces a knowledge of Divine things, a rational acquaintance with the highest truths, especially as these truths are set forth in Scripture. It is man's privilege and honour to search out the facts and laws of the physical universe, making himself familiar with the glory of the world; and it is still more imperative that this understanding should be brought to bear on the spiritual universe so that he may appreciate its eternal truths. We must satisfy our reason with the best possible account of Christian doctrine, and be ready to give to every man a reason for the hope that is in us. A truly religious life is closely allied with the intellect; it is ever seeking to get a wider, clearer view of the glorious doctrine of God.

1. *Mental growth is essential in the Christian life.*—Growth and vitality are closely interwoven. When you have one you have the other. Dr. John Ker says very wisely, 'The capacity of growth is that which, more than anything else, distinguishes one mind from another.' This is because the soul, being the truly living thing, can never find its treasures in dead things. Its possessions must grow, unfold, develop. Even the truths that the soul possesses must grow. But truth is apprehended by the mind, the understanding, therefore the action of the understanding is essential to the glow of the heart. We might easily overlook this fact, and many do—they regard intelligence and feeling as pertaining to different and inharmonious spheres. But the Scriptures teach otherwise. To love God 'with all the heart, and with all the understanding' is the first duty of man. The congruence between love and intelligence is perfect and essential. Our feelings are often cold because our knowledge is narrow and stale. It is only as knowledge supplies fresh fuel that the flame of love continues to burn brightly on the altar of the heart.

A man can live for many years on one truth. It suits his stage of development; he believes in it and makes it a kind of root from which his whole spiritual nature draws energy. A belief, for example, in the truth that God reigns, governing the smallest as the greatest occurrence, may be the prominent article in a man's creed for years, and may strengthen him to do much. Or the belief that God's will embraces all things, and that He can use every individual for the fulfilment of it, or the belief that God is in all things, and is ever putting forth Divine energy, may be the real spiritual nutriment on which a man lives for years.

But if such a person is to grow, if he is to have fresh strength infused into his spirit, and a broader light shed upon his field of action, if he is to make a deeper mark upon his generation, if, in short, he is to be more of a man and less of a child, he must be lifted out of his past state by the apprehension of some new truth, some truth old and effete, perhaps, to others, but breaking upon his mind with all the splendour and power of a new and direct revelation. The old truths do not pass away, but we no longer live exclusively upon them. If, then, we are to be strong and helpful men in Christ, we must seek nutriment in Christian truth.

What nutrition, then, are you giving to your spirit? Is it such as is likely to secure your growth? What do you read? Learn what a man reads and you will learn his spiritual condition. Newspapers and magazines admirably serve their ends, but these ends are not spiritual nutrition. The Bible read carelessly and formally, so many verses a day, will no more work a charm than any other book so read. But the Bible read with expectation, interest, thought, and personal application will yield nutriment of the most varied and stimulating kind. There are conditions of moral growth and health as there are conditions of physical growth; and carelessness in the one case is as certainly followed by disaster or by death as carelessness in the other.

¶ I remember Dr. Jackson's dictum on one appointment. 'You'll have to put a strong man there.' 'What do you mean by a strong man?' I asked. 'By a strong man, I mean a man that wherever you put him—*he'll grow.*'[1]

[1] G. F. Browne, *The Recollections of a Bishop*, 342.

2. *Mental growth is growth in the knowledge of God through God the Spirit.*—Mere change is not growth. Change may be so radical as to destroy growth. Forest fires and popular crazes are changes which abolish development. Nothing grows unless it has a central core of identity which does not change. Further, 'change' may be a fluctuation in any direction: in 'growth' the movement is constant in one. There is continual rising from lower to higher, and a fitting of the growing thing to its proper place in its environment, a discarding of scaffolds, as the building nears completion. A new light breaks on us from sociology, and we must advance by its means, and not put its truths on one side as if they had nothing to do with us in our moral progress. Fresh information keeps pouring in upon us from every scientific writer, school, and university. Do not let us go about wringing our hands at each fresh discovery of God's glorious methods of ordering His earth and all that is therein. Let us use these things, fit them into their proper place, and then go on with their help, not without it.

Now, applying this principle to the mental growth of the Christian, we see that the primary characteristic of this growth, and the point by which it may most readily be tested, is an increasing sense of the reality of spiritual values. Henry Ward Beecher speaks finely on this point: 'My own experience, in dealing with men, is that the greatest number of them have almost no definite conceptions of God. And when men begin to be awakened under the power of the truth and of the Holy Ghost, and to ask their way toward God, nothing is so common as the complaint that they can form no idea of God, and that to them, after all, there is no tangible and presentable God. But if one be of a devout nature, and he be earnestly alive to moral growth, then his reading and his childhood instruction, after being subject to reflection, to mental digestion, will carry him forward one step further in the growth of the knowledge of God. His conception of the Divine nature will begin to enlarge and fill out in every direction, if only there is a real, active, earnest moral life going on within him. In this work the imagination will be the architect, reason will be the master-builder, and the materials will come largely from experience.'[1]

It follows, then, that if we are to enter into our full heritage as Christians we must grow in the grasp, the intellectual grasp, the realization of the truths which lie wrapped up and enfolded in God. The first truths that a man learns when he becomes a Christian are the most important. But the aspect which these truths bear to the man when, first of all, they dawn upon him, and he sees in them the end of his fears, the cleansing of his heart, the pardoning of his sins, his acceptance with God, is a very different thing from the aspect that they ought to wear to him, after, say, forty years of experience. Life is the best commentary upon the truths of the gospel, and experience teaches their depths and their power, their far-reaching applications and harmonies.

3. *Mental growth can be checked or stimulated by ourselves.*—Human vitality, being of God, is an extraordinarily powerful thing, so that it is impossible to check growth altogether. But we may do much to stunt it. The nominal Christian often presents the dreary spectacle of arrested development. Most frequently the arrest has come about through the failure to realize that *all* sides of the personality must be allowed their full development. To check growth in any one direction is to check it in all. If we deliberately refuse to nourish the growth of our minds, our moral and spiritual development is bound to suffer. Growth implies symmetry. The oak upon the edge of a dense forest, on one side hardy and strong, on the other weak and famished, is a creature of unfortunate circumstances. Man is one-sided if he has the physical perfection of an Apollo and the mentality of a Caliban. The business man is unsymmetrical if he knows only business. The lawyer, minister, mechanic, each is exposed to the evils of excessive specialization. Wise builders do not have foundations strong in a few places only. The house we build to live in should have light on four sides. There is a world of glory for the mind that has windows through which it can come.

[1] H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 139.

To turn to the more cheerful side of the matter, how can we best stimulate our mental growth? It needs the fulfilment of three conditions: a clearsighted activity, a wise passivity, and an open-hearted receptivity.

(1) Growth in any kind of work is conditioned on fidelity to an advancing ideal; or, to be more exact, upon increasing clearness of discernment of an ideal. This is the secret of that divine discontent which drives the thinker, the teacher, and the artist steadily to fresh labours, new undertakings, and larger responsibilities. From the thoughts of such men mere idleness of life completely vanishes; to make achievement a ground of ease, as men make the amassing of a fortune an occasion of retiring from activity, does not occur to them. Achievement, to such spirits, means occasion for more exacting work and opportunity for more patient fitting of means and skill to finer ends.

(2) But along with this constant activity must go the power to sit still and be quiet. Culture is not quantity of learning but quality, not mass of information but ripeness and soundness of temper, spirit, and nature, and therefore time is an essential element in the process of securing it. A man may acquire information with great rapidity, but no man can hasten his growth. If the fruit is forced, the flavour is lost.

(3) With activity and passivity must go receptivity. We should imitate Canon Barnett, of whom his wife says, 'To him it was of no consequence by what channel the suggestion came, be it lovingly by the voice of a friend, or rudely from the impersonal press. As soon as he was shown a more excellent way, he immediately adopted it. Thus he grew more than anyone I have ever known.'[1] A true mental philosophy accepts all the facts of human experience. It seeks the mechanism of mind, but it also observes the nobler powers which make man a living soul and a child of God. . . . We grow broader not by seeing error, but by seeing more and more of truth.

These then, being the conditions, when we have established them what are we to do? Simply concentrate our energies on that line; resolve and do; hold ourselves firmly to this one thing, undismayed by this failure or that, and determine that, by God's help, there shall be some slight progression always.

¶ That is the wonderful thing about thought, that it is like a captive balloon which is anchored in one's garden. It is possible to climb into it and to cast adrift; but so many people . . . seem to end by pulling the balloon in, letting out the gas, and packing the whole away in a shed.[1]

[1] *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work and Friends*, viii.

III.

MORAL GROWTH.

Nothing is more remarkable than the gradual manner in which mankind has advanced in the path of moral progress. Quickened moral consciousness has brought it to pass that conditions tolerated before have now become intolerable. Mankind has powers of its own, and the Kingdom of God in its fullness is the effect of the operation of these powers. And they operate slowly—first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. The Kingdom of God in its perfection is not an immediate creation of God apart from men; it is not a great miraculous interference and exhibition of Divine power; it is a slow growth of the mind of mankind, through generation after generation of its life, and cycle after cycle of its history.

¶ The story of the Divine education of Israel, as it appears in the light of modern criticism, is a proof of the extreme slowness with which man grasps the most fundamental principles of morality. From Moses to Amos, the Israelites were learning what seems to us the elementary truth that right conduct is more important than the performance of ritual acts of worship. Ezekiel proclaimed a startling novelty to many of his age when he declared that every man is personally responsible to God Himself; but our Lord came to reveal to His disciples a view of duty and of religion far beyond anything of which the world had hitherto dreamed. He called upon men to make an unprecedented

[1] A. C. Benson, *Joyous Gard*, 71.

advance from formalism to spirituality, from laws to principles, from the tyranny of fear to the free service of love.[1]

1. *Moral growth is essential in the Christian life.*—Christianity is essentially an ethical religion—a religion which postulates that the conduct of its followers will comply with certain definite principles. But this compliance must be a vital and not a mechanical one. That is important. It is true that you can make almost anything in this world by machinery. And if you are a certain sort of man you will either see no difference between that product and the real, live thing, or you will think that all advantage lies with the machine-made thing. Some advantage does lie with it. Just the advantage of, say, yards of wood-moulding—rapid production, accurate fitting, value in practical use. There are machines, too, that can turn out for you by the score or thousand obedient children, and well-informed, well-mannered, well-behaved young men and women. But we do ill to seek to attain the ends of growth by the powers of a machine. In the way of life that is beautiful and agreeable to the highest intelligence there is an artist's appreciation of the signs of life and an artist's loathing of the signs of a machine. The Christian himself is both artist and artistic product; he is self-creator and self-created, in power given him which becomes his own freedom and his own life.

2. *Moral growth is a growth in likeness to God through Christ.*—Our physical life may easily grow in more than one direction. It does not give one much satisfaction to grow, for example, laterally. Moral growth also may be a growth of girth. There are moral natures which have grown more massive without growing better. There have been great men who have also been very great scoundrels. Mere growth alone is not enough. Our vices grow with our growth; our sins strengthen with our strength. Growth never did anything for any man but make him strong along the line on which he is walking, whether it be for good or for evil. Progress must be growth in those elements of human life which alone endure and are worth having—love, helpfulness, truth, righteousness, holiness. In one word, our moral growth must be growth in likeness to God as revealed in Christ. This is possible only if we deliberately take the right model in matters of conduct. There is indeed a profound law of our nature which alone explains the immense importance of a pattern or model in life. Whether we will or not, we become like that which we admire. If our heroes are men of ability but not men of principle, more intent upon personal credit or success than upon the public advantage; more anxious to outwit opposition than to secure the triumph of what is right and just, we shall insensibly but surely become like them too. And if they are men whose first idea is to promote, so far as they can, the reign of righteousness in themselves and among other men, we shall become, in our far-off measure, but to our great and lasting gain, like them too. A model is a necessity in man's moral activities; and there are at least as many models as there are races of men, nations, callings in life, kinds of occupation. Is there any one model higher than these—supreme, archetypal; a model not for men of one trade or art, but for men of all; not for one age, or country, or race, but for all, in striving to imitate whom man makes the very best he can of his manhood, gives scope and play to all in it that is highest and noblest, and carries it forward to those heights of excellence at which its real place in the universe, moral as well as material, is most clearly discerned? There is such a Model—Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the Ideal Man. It is true that with our finite capacities, we can, at the outside, imitate Him only piecemeal; and His servants from generation to generation have fixed, one on this, and another on that, feature of His Human Excellence in doing so. 'I,' exclaims one, 'will copy His humility': and another, 'I, His charity'; and another, 'I, His patience'; and another, 'I, His self-denial'; and another, 'I, His tenderness with those who misunderstood Him'; and another, 'I, His zeal'; and another, 'I, His

[1] A. W. Jephson, in *Churchmanship and Labour*, 138.

compassion for suffering.' And thus the rays of moral beauty which centre in and proceed from the Sun of Righteousness are distributed among His servants in varying measures of excellence; but all look up to Him; all know and feel and act upon the truth that He is the one Standard of human perfection; all say, with one voice, in endless chorus, 'Let us, if we may, grow up unto Him in all things which is the Head, even Christ.'

But in so attempting we must not make the disastrous error of forgetting that there is a level of attainment to which the Model offered us in our Lord invites us. That is the perfect proportion and balance which He holds between what may appear to us to be incompatible forms of excellence. Ordinary goodness among men, as we may often observe, constantly means the practising of one virtue at the cost of another; it seems incapable of keeping an eye upon the whole circle of excellences while endeavouring to excel in one particular. It will be impossible to avoid this wholly: but we are bound to try to avoid it as far as we can. We must not cultivate personal piety at the expense of our domestic duties, or, to perform these, neglect our civic ones. Neither must we be good citizens and bad husbands, any more than we should neglect our personal religion to please our friends.

¶ In the Supreme Type of Goodness there is no one-sidedness or lack of balance; in Him no excellence is ever stinted down by pressure into imperfect virtue, or exaggerated by impulse into something on the confines of vice. Thus, in our Lord, complete detachment from the ordinary interests and pleasures of the world was combined with an address and manners as far as possible removed from the ostentation of austerity: and His unrivalled dignity of character, based on and inseparable from His inevitable consciousness of greatness, did not check a perfectly simple and lowly bearing with all who approached Him. In Him there is no opposition between public duties and private attachments; no such compassion for the sinner as to involve even the semblance of indifference to sin; no such strong feelings about men or events as to imperil for a moment His perfect self-possession; no such calmness under opposition as to shade off into moral or intellectual lukewarmness about the Truth.[1]

3. *Moral growth can be checked or stimulated by ourselves.*—Let us consider some of the forces which may act as its deterrents or stimulants.

(1) There are many forces working to *stunt* moral growth. We may hinder it by forcing it into outgrown forms. The one fatal obstacle to progress is a craving for uniformity. There may be a beautiful unity in diversity. But uniformity whereby we crush out individuality and make all men think and do and act in the same way is fatal, not only to growth and progress, but to the right perception of God's methods in training up the human race. Acts of uniformity for which our forefathers used to fight, and which have descended to us in these days, may well be described as human attempts to contravene God's plans. For where there is a difference of opinion and practice, there one sees the Holy Spirit of God at work, there one notes that in this, at least, all sides get a hearing, and all facts are being taken into consideration; all persons, whether they have arrived at our standard or not, have a say in the matter. We believe that God is guiding us by the conclusion at which the wisdom of the race and the intelligence of mankind are gradually arriving. Again, we may stunt it by self-satisfaction. The tendency of the uninformed and the lazy is to rest content with what they are, and with what they are able to do without effort. But God never intended anybody or anything to rest contented as they are. Directly a person is content with what he is that person is not so good as he might be. To rest content with things as they are, to be able to do and to live without effort—this is only another name for death.

¶ We ought not to be immured among conventions and received opinions. We ought to ask ourselves why we believe what we take for granted, and even if we do really believe it at all. We ought not to condemn people who do not move along the same lines of thought; we

[1] H. P. Liddon.

ought to change our minds a good deal, not out of mere levity, but because of experience. We ought not to think too much of the importance of what we are doing, and still less of the importance of what we have done; we ought to find a common ground on which to meet distasteful people; we ought to labour hard against self-pity as well as against self-applause; we ought to feel that if we have missed chances, it is out of our own heedlessness and stupidity.[1]

(2) There are also many ways in which we may *stimulate* our moral growth. The first requirement of moral growth is perfect sincerity and honesty. Now truthfulness of character lies in what we are, not in what we say. A man may do an act or speak a word which agrees with fact, but himself be false to the core. Such is the hypocrite. It is necessary, if we would grow into Christ, to get rid of all feigning, to disbelieve in feeling unless we can put it into form, to use no expressions which we do not feel, to make our speech and act the natural outcome of ourselves. First, then, we must put aside all shams, all hypocrisy, be what we are; and then become the servant within of things that are eternally true—of things, that is, that are righteous. But sincerity, honesty, and earnestness alone are not enough; they are in continual danger of losing love, and without love they are worse than useless. It is the tendency of truthful characters to become hard, severe, unbending, harsh in judgment, rough in statement, proud of their truthfulness, unpitying to the weak. Seeing right clearly, they know it clearly, and make no allowances for blindness and ignorance. Feeling that their own lives are right, they are often impatient of wrong-doers, cannot forgive, cannot forget, and finally drift into persecution. Certain that their views are true, they cannot understand the condition of doubt, or of denial of truth; they not only contradict, but contradict with anger, and the end is bigotry. Our moral growth cannot be wholesome if it is not founded on the great commandment—'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy power, and *thy neighbour as thyself*.'

[1] A. C. Benson, *Joyous Gard*, 70.

Finally, we must have patience. Rome was not built in a day. The great bound from sin to righteousness is not to be a moment's work, but the slow and patient process of a lifetime, wherein there seems to be no progress as measured by the eye; but where the soul comes to its maturity as the babe becomes a man; fed and furthered by the experience of the moment, and helped by the grace of God.

> Whate'er we see,
> Whate'er we feel, by agency direct
> Or indirect, shall tend to feed and nurse
> Our faculties, shall fix in calmer seats
> Of moral strength, and raise to loftier heights
> Of love Divine, our intellectual soul.[1]

IV.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

We know that all living things grow—that if a plant does not bud and sprout, if a tree does not put forth its leaves, it is dead; and so in the spiritual life there must be growth: the Christian life is a life of growth, a life of progress. There is no conception of the life of God's children in Holy Scripture except as a life of growth, as a continual going forward in God's strength. 'The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' Our Lord declared, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' He spoke of Himself as the Vine, and His disciples as the branches; of their abiding in Him as the condition of life, and of their bringing forth fruit as the necessary consequence of that life.

There must be a continual increase of vitality if the life of the branch is to be maintained; and St. Paul carries on this thought when he speaks of the perfecting of the saints, of the work of the ministry, of the edifying of the body of Christ 'till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.'

1. *Spiritual growth is essential in the Chris-*

[1] Wordsworth.

tian life.—God's delight in creation was to make life—living things that could live of themselves. And the life of the seed which the earth brings to fruit of itself is but a symbol, a stage towards that higher form of created life—the will of the man, the power of the man to develop his own life, the power of the man to stand off, as it were, from his inspiring God, and acquire his own independent centre, and build up his own free career, and draw upon his own instinctive vitality.

And as man slowly realizes that all this wonderful gift of self-government, which at first sight sets him free to do just what he likes and to live without God, is in reality unaccountable except as the inbreathed image of God Himself, not imposed upon him, but entrusted to him; as he discovers what God has risked in endowing him so highly, and how amazing must be the love that could risk so much for the hope of being loved by a heart that was free to give itself back to Him who endowed it with its power to give itself away; then his soul melts, his spirit burns within him, and all his will uprises into the supreme act of self-surrender by which it yields itself, in gratitude and love, to the Father who begat it. In that act it enters the Kingdom of Heaven. And now, inside the Kingdom of Grace, as he feeds on the new powers which encompass him about within and without, he may find, to his overpowering joy, that, if once all that cramps and disfigures him has been purged out of him by Christ, his true, natural self, stirred to recovered vitality by supernatural impulses, begins in delightful freedom to 'grow of itself,' to bring forth fruit of itself, to disclose its ordered sequence of rhythmic change with the same even and unfaltering regularity as that with which the seed, in the earth, passes through its functional stages—'first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.'

That is the drama of growth as it eternally feasts the eyes of God. And it is this drama of internal spontaneous growth which He desires, with a yet profounder joy, to witness realized in the Kingdom of Heaven. The fullest delight we can give to God is to grow, to bring forth fruit as of ourselves. More truly than the seed, we, who have living wills, can do it. In the spontaneity of organic life we can see the type of what the spiritual life can fulfil.

2. *Spiritual growth is growth in nearness to God the Father.*—The first sign of this increasing nearness is a striking increase of particular spiritual graces—the fruits by which growth is known.

(1) Our character becomes *deeper*. Whenever we find strength and beauty of character, we may be sure that they spring from depth of soul, that the fibres have struck deep in the everlasting truth and love. And gaining this depth we enjoy a blessed stability and peace.

(2) The depth is accompanied by *breadth*. Not unusually we begin the spiritual life with narrow and ignorant views of the Divine character and government; but, justly cultured, the soul expands in the knowledge and love of God. A true believer has the capacity of growth, and comes to take wider and truer views of God's character and ways. There is also a growth in charity, a growth in heart as well as in intelligence. Writing to a friend, Wesley says, 'The longer I live, the larger allowances I make for human infirmities. I exact more from myself, and less from others.' What a true sign of growth! The growth in kindness, sympathy, and catholicity is one of the divinest signs of growth.

(3) There is growth in our service—our value to others. In other words, we are *living* 'Thy kingdom come' as well as praying it.

The noblest men and women are modest, homely, simple souls; yet they reveal a mild and serious grace which is in truth the perfection of beauty. In this unconscious winsomeness we ought to grow 'unto our lives' end. Further, what corn and wine do for men, the children of God do for the world—they diffuse life and gladness. Their faith, sympathy, counsel, and gifts become the inspiration, light, leading, and solacement of their neighbours. This service is the very glory of the Christian.

(4) And there is a notable increase in the *ease* with which we can make these graces habitual to us. Advancing growth makes it

actually more difficult to do wrong than to do right. Jeremy Taylor's great sermon,[1] one of the classics of our pulpit, has a notable passage to this effect: 'The second step of our growth in grace is, when virtues grow habitual, apt, and easy, in our manners and dispositions. The way is long and difficult at first, but in the progress and pursuit we find all the knots made plain, and the rough ways made smooth. The spirit of grace is like a new soul within him, and he hath new appetites and new pleasures, when the things of the world grow unsavoury, and the things of religion are delicious; when his temptations to his old crimes return but seldom, and prevail not at all, or in very inconsiderable instances, and stay not at all, but are reproached with a penitential sorrow and speedy amendment; when we do actions of virtue quickly, frequently, and with delight, then we have grown in grace in the same degree in which they can perceive these excellent dispositions.'

Man must pass from old to new,
From vain to real, from mistake to fact,
From what once seemed good, to what now
proves best.
How could man have progression otherwise? [2]

3. *Spiritual growth can be checked or stimulated by ourselves.*—As with mental and moral growth, the vital impulse may be thwarted and distorted, and when this is the case the consequences will be unutterably disastrous. If we escape from this there are certain preliminary conditions necessary before we can avail ourselves of the true essentials for real spiritual growth.

All growth that is not toward God
Is growing to decay. All increase gained
Is but an ugly, earthy, fungous growth.[3]

(1) We hinder our spiritual growth by turning away from God. So the greatest hindrance is sin, which always implies such a turning away. We cannot look God in the face and then sin.

But apart from what we may call positive sin, there are two other forms of this turning away, which, just because they are so easily recognized—being apt in fact to be taken for virtues—are nearly as dangerous. The first is a self-centred goodness. We want to grow—but we want it for our own sake. We are mocking our high descent, prostituting our heavenly powers, wasting our golden opportunity, profaning the temple of God, darkening our earthly life, hindering the evolution of the race, if we are not breaking forth into fresh and fairer forms of fellow-service every day, and applying the principles of Divine Sonship to the amelioration of the poverty, crime, and misery in the world around us.

The second is another way of letting ourselves hide God—it is the doubt of self. We see our own shortcomings, which is such a good thing that we let it blind us to the fact that we are forgetting to look at God's power. Moral imperfection, human weakness, 'carnal mind,' cry out 'I can't,' my life is studded with failures, the law of sin in my members wars against my resolution, and 'I can't.' In God's sons 'cant' is bad enough, but 'can't' is almost worse, for it is a virtual denial of the immanence of God. The fact is, God's sons, until they are awakened to 'the power that worketh in them,' do not know their strength.

¶ In India you will often see a string of powerful elephants quietly engaged in some agricultural pursuit, obedient to the Mahout who sits like a pigmy upon their necks. They are enslaved because they do not know their strength. Did they know it, they could 'burst their bonds asunder and cast away their cords from them.' God's sons fail because they will not discover, believe in, and utilize the 'power that worketh in them.' [1]

(2) But we must do more than avoid these pitfalls. We must put ourselves into such an attitude of soul that spiritual growth may be possible. We need humility, quietness, a steady and practical fervour, and a putting by of self. *Humility:* for the humble receptive heart of a little child is sure to grow in knowledge. Jesus made this a condition of

[1] *First Sermon on Growth in Grace.*
[2] Browning.
[3] George Macdonald.

[1] B. Wilberforce, *Steps in Spiritual Growth*, 7.

entering the Kingdom of Heaven, and adds that 'Whoso shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.' The besetting sin of the mind is likely to be intellectual pride and presumption. It often insists on paring down a subject to the dimensions of its own limited capacity. Someone has defined scepticism as the friction that results when a small mind tries to take in all at once a very big idea. *Quietness:* for 'to refrain the soul and keep it low' means that we must 'study to be quiet.' *Fervour:* for the quietness is not mere sluggishness—Christian quiet is a very radioactive process. It is far from mere fuss, but it does include steady energy. *Unselfishness:* for we can never gain any real spiritual growth if we want it only for ourselves. One of the primary conditions of spiritual health is that our good things, of whatever nature, shall be shared from member to member, in a complete system of circulation. And in addition to all these we need *Courage:* for so high as a tree aspires to grow, so high will it find an atmosphere suited to it. We must not be afraid to tackle 'the high that proves too high, the heroic for earth too hard.' To be brave is to have faith. In Fuller's splendid phrase, 'What was pride in the builders of Babel will be piety in us, to mount and raise our souls so high, till the top of them shall reach to Heaven.'

(3) When the preliminary conditions are right and the hindrances are removed, we must supply our growing selves with the essentials for growth. There are two things essential to the growth of animal life. One is food, the other is exercise; and our Christian character will grow by no other means. What do we mean by *food?* He who said, 'I am the true Bread,' He gives the life, He nourishes the life, He increases the life. We shall very much mistake what Christian progress requires, if we suppose that the effort is most profitably directed to the cultivation of specific and single acts of goodness and purity. Our efforts are best when directed to keeping ourselves in union with our Lord. The heart united to Him will certainly be advancing in all things fair and lovely and of good report.

What do we mean by *exercise?* Simply the use of the power that we have. If we use that, it will increase: if we do not, it will die. Just as the graces exercised are strengthened, so the graces unexercised decay. The slothful servant wraps his talent in a napkin and buries it in the ground. He may try to persuade his Master and himself with 'There thou hast that is thine'; but the Master will not take up what the servant buried. Rust and verdigris will have done their work upon the coin; the inscription will be obliterated and the image will be marred. We cannot bury our Christian grace in indolence without diminishing it.

We grow by thoughts, by impulses, by prayers. Every good thought brands itself on the soul. Every good impulse creates a new trend for the life which generates it. Every prayer for usefulness and goodness gives somewhat of bias to the man who offers it. All these things are tiny when compared with the great problem of human destiny, but it is the glory of our indulgent Master that by just such infinitesimal things we are furthered in our pursuit of the ideal.

> Man knows partly but conceives beside,
> Creeps ever on from fancies to the fact,
> And in this striving, this converting air
> Into a solid he may grasp and use,
> Finds progress, man's distinctive mark alone,
> Not God's, and not the beasts': God is, they are,
> Man partly is and wholly hopes to be.[1]

[1] Browning.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE

INTRODUCTION

THE LETTER—ITS CONTENTS AND MESSAGE.

Brief and vehement, this letter pulsates with alarm. The faith once delivered to the saints was in danger. The author had deliberately set aside his purpose of writing a formal treatise on their common salvation and to meet the urgency of the moment he issued instead this severely practical and pointed appeal and warning. Obnoxious people had crept into the Church—the sort whose miserable end had been predicted. Their doctrines were bad and their morals abominable. They disowned the one sovereign Lord, Jesus Christ. The fate of unbelievers, even among the Israelites whom God had saved from Egypt, the doom of the rebel angels chained in the gloom of the nether regions, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, should be warning enough. Yet these fantastic dreamers scoffed at the heavenly powers. Animality was their province—that was the one thing they understood. They were disciples of Cain, false prophets out for gain like Balaam, doomed sedition-mongers like Korah up against order and authority in the Church. Their debauchery shamed the love-feasts. They traded on credulous folk—shepherds who fed themselves and not their sheep. They were as detestable as the deceptive and baleful things in Nature, and judgment would fall on them as Enoch had foretold. These were the mockers Jesus had in mind in His prediction. 'Pneumatics,' they called themselves! With their claim to superior spirituality they simply made division in the Church. Against these men there was but one defence—that true Christians should build themselves up in their most holy faith, pray in the spirit, bide in the love of God, and look for the mercy of Jesus. One, and One alone, there was who could keep their feet from falling.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LETTER.

No intellectual here speaks, we might say, but just an honest zealous churchman. The literature he quotes is the popular apocalyptic—the Book of Enoch (*cf.* ver. 6, 14), the Assumption of Moses (*cf.* ver 9)—and he knows his O.T. well, for the antithetical style of Hebrew writing seems to be in his ears. If there is some intellectual subtlety at the base of this intruding heresy he is not the man to expose it. If he would but stay and define the error, analyse it and argue it point by point, then we might date the document. But this is a plain man who goes out on no mental butterfly-chasings, but is content to stand foursquare against innovations, holding stubbornly by the body of teaching he has received. He is no dabbler in Greek philosophies, but a student of the scriptures of the O.T. (*cf.* ver. 11), a keeper of the Master's sayings (*cf.* 18, ?4), a believer in the apocalyptic hope that the time is short and soon comes the crack of doom on those who have not followed in the straight paths of the fathers. This sect he seeks not to out-manœuvre but to flood out with abuse. There are indications that our author knew his Paul. His grand doxology has echoes of Romans (xvi. 25f.), and his scorn

for the superior 'pneumatics' (ver. 19) recalls the attitude of the great apostle (*cf.* 1 Co. ii. 14). So we suspect he belongs to an age that looks back with pious reverence on Paul and the apostles. And we do get stray hints to corroborate that view. A contemporary of Paul would hardly refer to a saying of Jesus as set forth 'of old' (ver. 4), and the words of the apostles evidently are no longer to be heard, as he writes, with the hearing of the ear, but live only in the memory (*cf.* ver. 17). We are pushed back then to at least the age of the Pastoral Epistles, which, indeed, Jude resembles here and there in cast of thought and colour of phrasing. There is the same use of 'faith' as signifying the closed system of truth handed down (ver. 3), the venerated treasure that is to be wrapt in a napkin and not put out to trade and development. To quote a saying settles a question: it is law as a commandment from Sinai was law (*cf.* ver. 17 with Timothy, *passim*). There is a like contempt for the insidious ways of heretics (*cf.* ver. 4 with 2 Tim. iii. 8).

Thus, if there are not clear and decisive marks to date the letter, there are slight impressions that almost persuade. It has no breath of inspiration, no touch of the creative apostolic age. It looks back with pious reverence on the epoch that saw the birth of the faith, and is well content simply to conserve. It does not expect fresh life to break from within Christian truth, the light to grow fuller and clearer as minds kindle and hearts grow more faithful to Jesus. Rather it broods on the apocalyptic cataclysm without that is to separate the tares from the wheat, and its concern is to be found among the finest of the wheat.

WHO WERE THE HERETICS?

In the torrential condemnation of these disturbers who had wormed their way into the Church there is generated more heat than light. We have but vague hints of their beliefs. Evidently they are antinomians of some sort, men of scandalous life who give their passions free rein, corrupt Sodomites indeed (*cf.* ver. 4, 7, 8, 10, 16). They justify themselves by a claim to higher enlightenment (ver. 19): inspired as they are, in their own eye they are above discipline. This would appear to be some form of Gnosticism. Some conclude, on the basis of ver. 8-10, that they rejected the O.T. and regarded Jehovah and the angels as evil powers or negligible entities to be scoffed at by the 'spiritual'—also a Gnostic idea. The stressing of the 'only' Lord (ver. 4) and 'only' God (ver. 25) may be in contradistinction to dualistic notions, which, along with the claim to sexual licence, would fit the Carpocratians. The denying of Christ, combined with immorality, suggests the Nicolaitans (*cf.* Rev. ii. 6, 13, 15). The mention of Cain and Korah (ver. 11) reminds us of the Ophites, who held them in honour.

Exactitude, then, we cannot attain on the evidence, but as libertines and 'pneumatics' they were probably a variety of Gnostics.

WHO WROTE THE LETTER?

'Judas, a servant of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James'—so runs the title (i. 1). What Jude is this? There is a Judas Barsabbas (Ac. xv. 22, 23) who acted along with Silas on a deputation from the apostles, and there is Judas, the son or brother of James (Lk. vi. 16, Ac. i. 13), but we have no authority for attaching the letter to either. The Jude most probably intended is Jude, the Lord's brother, here called, from motives of reverence, the 'servant' rather than the 'brother' of Jesus. The grandchildren of this Jude were examined before Domitian [1]—an episode which gives a rough date. The question, then, is whether their grandfather would survive as late as the atmosphere of this letter seems to require. At earliest, according to our analysis, the letter could be assigned to the last twenty years of the first century. The case for Jude's authorship can thus be just barely made out.

The letter, however, may be regarded as falling in better with the conditions prevailing

[1] As relatives of Jesus and counted members of the Royal House of David these grandchildren of Jude were possible rallying points for sedition and examined accordingly. They were peasant farmers, men with horny hands, simple folk who explained that they did not look for an earthly but for a heavenly kingdom, and Domitian dismissed them as little likely to cause trouble.

in the first half of the second century, in which case it would be a pseudonymous pamphlet. Jude's name would be adopted from his near relationship to Jesus—a point that would count at least in Christian circles dominated by James.

WHO WERE THE ADDRESSEES?

If Jude wrote the letter, the churches in Palestine or Syria would be likely recipients. If it came from a later hand, it might have been published in Asia Minor or Egypt, wherever the heretics were operating. But particular destination the letter may never have had. It is a tract for the times sent broadcast because the faith is endangered and Christians generally need the warning.

JOHN DOW.

A Salutation.

Jude 2.—'Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied.'

THE richness of the language of St. Jude's salutation is due to his experience of the bountiful goodness of God. From Him proceeds not only the communication of blessing, but the large unceasing growth and augmentation of blessing. It is like a copious harvest, perpetually increasing. 'Whosoever hath,' it is twice written in St. Matthew, 'to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.' 'I came that they may have life,' says St. John, 'and that they may have it abundantly.' 'Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace' is St. John's own witness concerning Christ. And language of the same kind, in respect of the goodness of God, runs all through the Scriptures. In St. Paul's writings the word 'riches,' applied to spiritual things, is so frequent that it may almost be taken as characteristic. The First and Second Epistle of St. Peter both open with the same phraseology (though in a form less copious) as that which we find here in St. Jude, 'Grace unto you and peace be multiplied.'

1. Take the gifts in the order that St. Jude adopts—first, mercy. The mercy of God is the first great necessity of our souls. Without it, we are utterly hopeless and lost. Just as the multitudes were fed, because the Lord had compassion—just as the wounded man was gently cared for and placed in safety, because the good Samaritan had compassion—so is it with the hunger of our spirit and the wounds inflicted by sin. And this compassion—this mercy—is a fountain always fresh, exuberant, and overflowing, and never failing in any season of drought. St. Jude knows that what he desires for his fellow-Christians will be granted in answer to prayer. 'The Lord's compassions fail not; they are new every morning.' 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and he will abundantly pardon.'

¶ Dr. Whyte used to tell of an incident which occurred at the end of Dr. John Carment's life. Dr. Whyte had occasion to call on business at the office of his friend, who was then far over eighty years of age. After their business was completed, the noble old lawyer thrust his papers and writing materials on one side, and looking straight across the cleared desk at his visitor, said with great intensity, 'Have ye any word for an old sinner?' Dr. Whyte described his amazement at the abrupt question, coming from one whom he revered as a saint on the very verge of glory. For a moment he was too non-plussed to answer; but then the words came into his heart which he had given to one and another in the course of his visiting that afternoon, and he stammered out, '*He delighteth in mercy*'—and so took his leave. Next morning he received a letter from Dr. Carment, telling that he had been passing through a season of profound inward darkness, but that the four words left with him by his friend had sent a flood of light into his spirit. The light never again faded until, a very few days later, he passed into the perfect day.[1]

2. And secondly, *peace*. In one sense, indeed, the peace of the Christian does not admit

[1] G. F. Barbour, *The Life of Alexander Whyte*, 316.

of augmentation. 'Peace' has been fully made by Jesus Christ. Through the Cross 'all middle walls of partition' have been 'broken down.' But the sense of peace in the heart, repose in the soul through affiance in Christ—this admits of degrees. The multiplication of this is a blessing the value and magnitude of which cannot be described. Peace, too, among ourselves certainly admits of degrees, and we have often very serious reason for thinking of this. For ourselves, in our own troubled spirits, we long for the time when we shall 'delight ourselves in the abundance of peace.' 'Tossed with a tempest,' we long for the time when we shall be in the condition of those who, after a storm, look over a calm surface of ocean with only ripples moving in the sunlight.

I have been tried,
Tried in the fire,
And I say this,
As the result of dire distress,
And tribulation sore—
That a man's happiness doth not consist
Of that he hath, but of the faith
And trust in God's great love
These bring him to.
Nought else is worth consideration.
For the peace a man may find
In perfect trust in God
Outweighs all else, and is
The only possible foundation
For true happiness.[1]

3. And out of mercy and peace there grows up, in the third place, *love*. Our love to God, our love to one another, is so weak and poor that it needs large and perpetual augmentation. St. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians must be our prayer for ourselves: 'The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another and toward all men.' And again, though it is to be feared that this is far above our level: 'As touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. But we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more.'

¶ Love, and God will pay you with the capacity of more love; for love is Heaven—love is God within you.[1]

Oh, how skilful grows the hand
That obeyeth love's command!
It is the heart and not the brain
That to the highest doth attain;
And he who followeth love's behest
Far excelleth all the rest.[2]

[1] John Oxenham, *Bees in Amber*, 115.

The Common Salvation.

Jude 3.—'While I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation.'

WHAT are we to understand by 'our common salvation'? The expression is significant. Evidently it means neither more nor less than the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is described again in the latter part of this same verse as 'the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.' And the Apostle Paul also, in the beginning of his Epistle to Titus, calls it 'the common faith.' How is the gospel of salvation common?

1. Salvation is common because it deals with the same age-long, far-extending, consolidated entity of evil. It lifts from the depths of the same shame and peril. We are accustomed to make many distinctions of detail in sin of which God, perhaps, takes little or no account. Sin, as we reckon it, is separable into independent parts, some of which are worse than others. But God does not thus judge things. The one deep unseen root of sin is in us all.

¶ The native fishermen of the coasts of our Eastern colonies were once in the habit of grappling for the submarine cables and stealing sections of copper wire, which they could sell for old metal wherever a market offered. The measure of the crime was not determined by the amount of raw material stolen. A man might steal an inch, a yard, or ten miles, and the interruption to communication would be just as serious. When an expedition has to be sent a thousand miles to repair a cable it makes comparatively little difference to the cost whether an inch or a mile has been stolen.

[1] F. W. Robertson.
[2] Longfellow.

And is it not thus with sin? From the standpoint of social order and human law the form of its outbreak may matter much, but for the ends of Divine Government it matters little whether a man has cherished for an hour a rebellious passion that divides him from God, or sinned against every precept of the Bible. The disaster is measured by the interruption caused to the great ends of man's creation.[1]

2. The salvation is common because it is rooted in a redeeming sacrifice that is one and indivisible. When the Apostle singles himself out from his fellows and exclaims, 'Who loved me and gave himself for me,' he is not departing from his habit of thinking of himself as a unit in the aggregate whole. The one view is always completed by the other. Social reformers have argued that whatever is taken away from the use of the individual robs the community at large of its possessions. The virtue of Christ's sacrifice must not be treated after the analogy of a property, for it can never become the perquisite and monopoly of the individual believer. However vast the multitudes who come to trust in its efficacy and make proof of the endless grace which issues from it, its potency does not decline or exhaust itself, for it is so incalculable in the range of its benignity that it is justly described as infinite, and you cannot divide the infinite without making it finite by the process. The New Testament always looks at Christ's sacrifice as a self-consistent and indissoluble whole, availing, in its inviolable integrity, for an undivided race. It cannot be analysed into parts. Is not this perhaps the true meaning of the Paschal injunction, precept, and symbolic prophecy in one, 'A bone of him shall not be broken'? It is certainly a thought uppermost in the minds of the Apostles who gave us the theology of the Cross. The peculiar efficacy of the sacrifice for the redeemed is never asserted apart from the declaration that its efficacy is world-wide. 'He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' The great sacrifice does save all men from the full brunt of condemnation, otherwise we should be living in a realm overcast by far darker skies. It saves every man from pain, despair, present wrath, into evangelical privilege. He who attempts to divide its efficacy, saying the major portion of Christ's death was for this saint and the minor portion only for yonder reprobate, or to carry his analysis further and say this and that fraction of the meritorious offering was for me and for me only, is offending against the unity of the expiatory act. The sacrifice is ever active, and at the same time exhaustless, because it is Divine.

¶ Calvinist as he [Dr. Guthrie] certainly was, he emphatically disapproved any attempt to square Scripture with the supposed requirements of a doctrinal system. 'John,' to quote a sentence from one of his discourses, 'uses a very broad expression. "Jesus Christ," he says, ". . . is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "The whole world"—"ah!" some would say, "that is dangerous language." It is God's language; John speaking as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. It throws a zone of mercy around the world. Perish the hand that would narrow it by a hair's breadth!'[1]

3. Salvation is common because it is administered upon conditions which are unimpeachably impartial. It may be argued against this that the terms laid down for those who seek salvation create new inequalities because the capacity for religious faith varies with the individual. The gospel may promise the same experience of blessing to the recipients, but the requirements are much harder for some than for others. The pool of Bethesda may have no scale of fees, but access to its healing virtues is possible for only a fraction of those who lie weltering in its porches. Religion is like our Law Courts, which are nominally open to rich and poor alike, but in which the long purse does much to invalidate the theory. We are told that some men are so poor in moral qualities that we might almost as well bid

[1] T. G. Selby.

[1] D. K. and C. J. Guthrie, *Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie, D.D.*, ii. 194.

them fly as command them to repent. Some men, we are told, lack the capacity for religious faith. They are half-paralysed disciples in the school of Thomas the materialist. It does violence to their natures to give themselves up to the will and authority of an unseen Saviour. And thus, however common the salvation may be in its original purpose, the law of evangelical life gives rise to inequalities as flagrant and grievous as any that are found under the most defective human governments. But is it so in the final issue? Do not repentance and faith admit of degrees in the beginning of the religious history, and is it conceivable that from the man in whom the capacity for these things has been minimized to the point of extinction God will demand the same complete conditions as He may seek from those who are more highly privileged? An impartial judgment is even now interwoven with the ministration of the redemptive gifts. Imperfect human charities, and even the State itself, help the man who is defenceless in the Law Courts. Is it conceivable that the Divine charity expressed in the common salvation is less perfect than our own? At some stage or other in their history all men become fit to respond in some degree to the message that bids men repent and believe on the Lord Jesus. God cannot finally damn a man for the failure to do that of which he is quite incapable. Personal idiosyncrasies may cause temporary stumbling, but wise and subtle compensations protect the common salvation against the loss of its glorious catholic attribute.

> As men from men
> Do, in the constitution of their souls,
> Differ, by mystery not to be explained;
> And as we fall by various ways, and sink
> One deeper than another, self-condemned,
> Through manifold degrees of guilt and shame;
> So manifold and various are the ways
> Of restoration, fashioned to the steps
> Of all infirmity, and tending all
> To the same point, attainable by all—
> Peace in ourselves, and union with our God.[1]

4. The common salvation puts before all men the same hope of spiritual excellence, and so justifies the greatness of its claim. It asserts the coequal possibilities of every man, whatever the race to which he belongs. Not only does it open a door of escape from the ruin wrought by sin, but it points out a great highway leading into the highest spheres of spiritual perfection. It is a widespread notion that the Divine impartiality which asserts itself in the gospel ceases when rescue from the slough has been achieved, and that other causes than those of a universal grace come in to determine the higher developments of character. Sanctity is a peculiar gift reserved for select and representative temperaments. Some years ago a writer of the Positivist School said that the ethic of Christianity was perfect, too perfect for the average man or woman, and that Christianity is fitted to be the religion of only a very small group of saints. We are not surprised at such a judgment from an unbeliever, but it is depressing to hear Christians say of their comrades who were converted late in life, or who seem to have an incurable crook in the character, 'We must be thankful they are saved from the dregs of viciousness. They are not likely to attain much more in the present life. It is a great thing that they have been saved from flagrant animalism, and it is overmuch to hope that high virtue and spiritual refinement will appear within them. You cannot expect a creature trained amongst bats to soar like a lark.' It is assumed that sanctity is three parts the gift of birth and breeding, and the fourth part that indefinable mystery suddenly added to human life which we call Divine grace. But the gospel falsifies our deterministic philosophies. Salvation is not only out of the mire, but into the loftiest excellence reached by the purest and most devoted followers of Jesus. The motley Corinthians are called saints, for one point of the transition through which they are passing may be in the mire, but the other is in the cloud where God dwells and speaks. The race that becomes most godly may be the race which at the beginning gave least promise. The converted cannibal may outshine the easygoing man who has ten centuries of Christian culture in his blood.

[1] Wordsworth.

The unchurched sections of society are again and again brought to the forefront of discipleship. The hand of Divine power is ever leading men out of the thick darkness, and putting them not only on the outskirts of the firmament but in the central constellations.[1]

¶ It is the Lord Chief Justice of England who speaks, in September 1920:

'As Lord Chief Justice of England and the head of the judicial administration of the criminal law of England, I have good reason to speak well of the Salvation Army. As I speak to you now I can conjure up the face of a man who stood in the dock before me. It was transfigured by faith. He had been a criminal all his life, and, arrested for a grave crime, he was tried, convicted and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. That man stood in the dock before me when I presided in the Court of Criminal Appeal. In the interval he had been reached by the Salvation Army. The man's face was no longer that of a criminal. It was the face of one who had found his God, and by reason of that reformation my brother judges and I set aside the sentence of long years, believing in our hearts that the man would go forth and help other men.'[2]

The Faith and its Interpretation.

Jude 3.—'Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.'

It is not enough for us to know how a truth was read with the best knowledge of a bygone day; we must read it in the light of our own if it is to illuminate us. It is not enough that an interpretation of some fragment of Christ's teaching harmonized with the moral sense of the past; it must harmonize with ours if it is to have over us a real and moving power. We must be able to identify our Christianity with our best. We cannot suffer the suspicion that we accept as Christian anything that is below the level of the highest knowledge and the best morality of our day. Loyalty to the faith, and profound confidence in its truth, cannot endure the thought that there can be anything in the finest light or highest moral feeling of the age which Christianity shirks and is unable to face.

Thus we cannot regard the faith once delivered as a kind of fossil thing, bequeathed to us by our ancestors, to be passed on by us to others, a lifeless heirloom. Loyalty to the faith is conventionally thought to consist in trying to hold unchanged the aspects it had of old. We look back to some far off time, and see that to our fathers the Creed was a power for truth and life, and we assume that the security for its being the same to us lies in holding it exactly as they held it; and thus we ally the Christian faith with intellectual positions that have become obsolete and with stages of moral culture that have been outgrown. Somewhere in the past we feel there was a golden age of orthodoxy, and a vision arises before us of saintly Fathers and mediæval monks, and reverence for the great and good of other days, and for their service to Christ, comes to mean that we must think like them on the religious facts that are common to them and to us. Differences of race, temperament, intellectual outfit, moral and spiritual atmosphere are ignored, and we fail to see how impossible it really is for, say, a modern Englishman, though he holds the same truths, to think of them and believe them as did a Jew of the first century, a Greek of the fourth, or an Italian monk of the thirteenth. That they may be to us the power they were to them, that they may enlighten our minds and stir our moral aspiration, they must speak to us in the tongue of our own day. There must be an adjustment to changed intellectual and moral conditions. Their appeal must come in a form intelligible to us ourselves, and there must be such translation of ancient truth that its light can be felt by modern Christians to be the truest, and its morality the very highest we can see.

1. Christianity is God's great message in the past, but its fullness is inexhaustible and it is equally His message to the present. The march of science is part of His teaching now and through all the centuries, nor can we

[1] T. G. Selby.
[2] D. Crawford, *Back to the Long Grass*, 372.

interpret ancient revelation and read its meaning for ourselves uninfluenced by the lessons He has given to our own time. The Christian revelation means life and truth for us as well as for those to whom it first came; but we thwart its living reality to us if we encumber it with intellectual or moral views that may indeed have helped the men of other days, but are not an essential part of the truth and have now been left behind. This linking of eternal truth with changing views is always a peril to Christian belief. We know how Christianity was once identified with a particular view of the physical world, and it was assumed that men could not be Christian unless they believed that the earth was the centre of the universe. Then those who loved Christ and loved truth had to face the trying problem of an antagonism between the two, and it was thought that the new science must involve the downfall of Christianity. There was the need for intellectual revision in Christian faith, and it was accomplished, and the faith is with us still.

2. It was believed once that little children dying unbaptized were condemned to unending woe. Men were able to fit this in with the current thoughts of God, and there was no revolt of the moral sense to convince them that such a view was wrong. Such belief is impossible for us. There has been a great development and refinement in our interpretation of the character of God which condemns those notions of God as crude and imperfect. We could not reconcile such ideas with our moral consciousness. There came the necessity for a moral revision in the way men held the faith, and it was accomplished, and the faith is with us still. And so we get back to the thought that larger knowledge and a more developed moral feeling cannot be reconciled with many of the views held by our ancestors in the faith, and that our traditional belief needs constant intellectual and moral revision if it is to be to us a fresh and living power. Faith is always in danger where it gets in any way severed from what the intellect accepts. When Christianity becomes associated with intellectual positions which are seen to be untrue, or the moral aspects of a Christian doctrine clash with our highest ethical feeling, then Christianity begins to lose its power over us, there is an ever-widening breach between it and what we really revere, and the supremacy of Christianity over the individual is taken by something else that is really his best.

¶ It was when we had got out to Flanders, and were on the eve of our first visit to the trenches, that I heard the first definite attempt to discuss religion, and then it was only two or three who took part. The remainder just listened. It was bedtime and we were all lying close together on the floor of a hut. We were to go into the trenches for the first time the next day. I think that every one was feeling a little awed. Unfortunately we had just been to an open-air service, where the chaplain had made desperate efforts to frighten us. The result was just what might have been expected. We were all rather indignant. We might be a little bit frightened inside; but we were not going to admit it. Above all, we were not going to turn religious at the last minute because we were afraid. So one man began to scoff at the Old Testament, David and Bathsheba, Jonah and the whale, and so forth. Another capped him by laughing at the feeding of the five thousand. A third said that in his opinion any one who pretended to be a Christian in the Army must be a humbug. The sergeant-major was fatuously apologetic and shocked, and applied the closure by putting out the light and ordering silence.

It was not much, but enough to convince me that the soldier, and in this case the soldier means the working man, does not in the least connect the things that he really believes in with Christianity. He thinks that Christianity consists in believing the Bible and setting up to be better than your neighbours. By believing the Bible he means believing that Jonah was swallowed by the whale. By setting up to be better than your neighbours he means not drinking, not swearing, and preferably not smoking, being close-fisted with your money, avoiding the companionship of doubtful characters, and refusing to acknowledge that such have any claim upon you.

This is surely nothing short of tragedy. Here were men who believed absolutely in the Christian virtues of unselfishness, generosity, charity, and humility, without ever connecting them in their minds with Christ; and at the same time what they did associate with Christianity was just on a par with the formalism and smug self-righteousness which Christ spent His whole life in trying to destroy.

The chaplains as a rule failed to realize this. They saw the inarticulateness, and assumed a lack of any religion. They remonstrated with their hearers for not saying their prayers, and not coming to Communion, and not being afraid to die without making their peace with God. They did not grasp that the men really had deep-seated beliefs in goodness, and that the only reason why they did not pray and go to Communion was that they never connected the goodness in which they believed with the God in Whom the chaplains said they ought to believe. If they had connected Christianity with unselfishness and the rest, they would have been prepared to look at Christ as their Master and their Saviour. As a matter of fact, I believe that in a vague way lots of men do regard Christ as on their side. They have a dim sort of idea that He is misrepresented by Christianity, and that when it comes to the test He will not judge them so hardly as the chaplains do. They have heard that He was the Friend of sinners, and severe on those who set up to be religious. But however that may be, I am certain that if the chaplain wants to be understood and to win their sympathy he must begin by showing them that Christianity is the explanation and the justification and the triumph of all that they do now really believe in. He must start by making their religion articulate in a way which they will recognize. He must make them see that his creeds and prayers and worship are the symbols of all that they admire most, and most want to be.[1]

3. Let us repudiate all assumption that Christianity is condemned by any advance of knowledge, and that no intelligent and reasonable men can hold the great convictions that have enlightened and empowered myriads of souls through sixty Christian generations. We do not believe that 'the best yield of the latest time' in knowledge or in ethical conviction can find a stumbling-block or disappointment in Christianity. Where it is so it is not Christianity but our interpretation of it, and our interpretation needs revising. It is hard to sympathize with the wailings that are sometimes heard about bygone ages of faith, as though faith were better where there was more credulity. There may be a very true service of faith in rejecting some teaching offered in Christ's name, if it contradicts one's convictions of goodness, justice, and love, and in reading old beliefs only in the light of His newest lessons. Thus, orthodoxy becomes not the stereotyped repetition of any one century's doctrines, but the truest interpretation of Christian truths in the thought and language proper to the age.

¶ That the principle of orthodoxy has its rightful place and use is clearly enough manifested in the New Testament. When St. Paul bids Timothy 'Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me,' he is clearly enough declaring that for immediate use the truth, so far as it is at present known, may and must cast itself into a definite and available expression, but his prayer in the next chapter, 'The Lord give thee understanding in all things,' is not therefore a meaningless or hopeless prayer. When St. Jude exhorts his hearers that they should 'earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints,' he is beyond all doubt asserting that there is an accepted substance of the religion which he and they believe. But no one surely reads that overburdened text aright who does not ever hold in his remembrance that the faith of which Jude speaks is more moral than doctrinal, more personal than abstract, and that being the word of life it can be effectively contended for only as it is constantly expected to open new richness in the advancing relations to the life of men. In that great text truth and orthodoxy meet and blend, not by the limiting of truth to that which the disciple has already consciously

[1] D. Hankey, *A Student in Arms*, 110ff.

appropriated, but by the enlargement of orthodoxy till it potentially possesses all that is included in, and to be unfolded from, the Word of God, the Christ who is the inexhaustible possession of the Christian and the Church. On the other hand, the evil disposition of orthodoxy was never more perfectly displayed than when St. John himself said to the Lord, 'Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.' [1]

Unto the Saints.

Jude 3.—'The faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.'

'A TEXT for heroes,' says Dr. Nairne. Indeed it is that. There is the true heroic ring about it. It sounds the note of challenge and appeal. Unfortunately, by some extraordinary act of misappropriation, it has become the watchword of a reactionary type of orthodoxy. It is difficult to see how 'the faith delivered to the saints' has ever come to mean the faith contained in the creeds. The words give clear and vivid expression to the truth that 'the Church . . . the pillar and ground of the Truth' is the fellowship of saints.

The faith lives in the lives of the saints. Where the saints are there is Christ. What could be farther from this than the idea that the faith is something which can be embodied in a set of dogmas, expressed once for all in a creed, and handed down from age to age carefully guarded by ecclesiastical authority?

There is indeed a true and proper use for creeds. A scholar need not be a saint, but a saint may be a scholar. We need scholars and theologians to express from time to time the intellectual implications of Christianity. But they are bound to think and to speak in terms of the categories and vocabularies of their age. There is one thing that never changes. It is the same in a little child, in old age, and in middle life; it is the same in the first century and in the twentieth—to be a Christian, to be an adoring and obedient disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ. The very genius of the Christian religion is involved in this. The Christian faith, and all that it implies of guidance in this life and hope for that which is to come, is inseparably bound up with a certain way of life. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

It is quite true that the word 'saint' in the New Testament does not mean exactly what the word suggests to us. But it means more and not less. The word is commonly used today in two senses. If a man is described today as being a saint, what is meant is either that he is rather ultra pious, 'unco guid,' or else that he is a fine moral character. Thus it is sometimes said of a very religious person of a not very robust character, 'He's quite a saint in his way.' It is also said of a man who is not religious in any real sense of the word but who lives a very good life, 'That man is a saint, whatever his religion may be.' Neither of these uses of the word is in accordance with the New Testament.

The root idea of the word 'saint' is separation. A saint is a person set apart, consecrated to the service of God. But this comes inevitably to mean also separation from the world. So that we may say that a saint is one who possesses a certain character because he stands in a certain relation to God. The religious and moral implications of the word are inseparable. There is a certain type of character which is the result of a certain relationship to God, and which can result in no other way.

Not long ago I saw a remarkable play by Mr. John Galsworthy called *The Skin Game*. In this play the contrast is presented with extraordinary vividness between an English aristocrat of a very fine type and a specimen of the *nouveau riche* of the vulgar sort. It is only one incident in the play that I want to mention. The plutocrat has gone back upon his word; he has broken faith with the squire. There was no legal document, no written contract; it was an affair of honour. I shall never forget the passion, the agony almost, in the voice of the squire as he exclaims, after all argument had failed, 'But it isn't done!' Exactly; it isn't done. I suppose this un-

[1] Phillips Brooks, *Essays and Addresses*, 187.

written code of personal honour is the finest tradition of our aristocracy, and woe betide us if we lose it! It is something which can never be expressed in any code: it is an unwritten law, almost an instinct of second nature. And now listen to this description, by the late Bishop Paget, of the Christian character. 'It has about it the air of God's presence; it is accustomed to the ways of His court.' Yes; 'it is accustomed to the ways of His court.' Here is the beauty of holiness; this is the glory of the saint. It is a character, it is morality, but it is something more. It has about it the atmosphere of the court. Or as Dr. Rainy might have said in a more rugged phrase, 'It has dwelt among the sublime scenery of redemption.'

That is the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.[1]

Hidden Rocks.

Jude 12.—'These are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feast.'

The Agapē or Love-feast was an institution of the primitive Church that shows how much it was in earnest with the principle of Christian brotherhood. The early Christians considered it as natural that the members of a congregation should meet for a common meal as that they should meet for common worship. Hence arose the Love-feast—a congregational dinner or supper which was probably a weekly event, and which was followed and hallowed by the celebration of the Holy Communion. It has even been argued that in the early period this common meal was identical with the Communion service. By many ancient writers the Love-feast was warmly extolled. 'It is a truly Christlike institution,' they said, 'for it fosters brotherly love, inculcates humility, and relieves and solaces poverty.' So popular was the institution that when the great St. Augustine, four centuries after our era, attempted to put it down in his African diocese, he tells that riots broke out, and that he was even in some danger of his life.

Beautiful, however, as was the Love-feast in expressing the sentiment of brotherhood, and useful as it was in linking religion to social life, it soon developed certain objectionable features. Unworthy guests found their way to the table—attracted thither, not by the communion of saints, but by the loaves, the fishes, and the wine; and the scandalous spectacle was seen of men eating and drinking to excess, and then taking into their polluted hands the sacred emblems of the body and blood of the Lord. Others, we read, disdained to eat of the common provision, and brought with them luxuries for their own exclusive enjoyment. Again, there were those who did not respect the devotional aims of the gathering, but gave utterance to heretical or revolutionary opinions, and thus aroused theological or political passions. By these and other abuses, it was felt the Love-feast was being spoiled. In our text the writer deplores them, or the people responsible for them, as 'spots in the feast of charity,' or better, as in the Revised Version, 'hidden rocks in your love-feast.'

Turn to modern life. These hidden rocks present themselves in moods, theories, and sentiments, as well as in false brethren; and against these subtlest perils we must diligently watch. Many of the rocks which threaten us stand out conspicuously enough. We are ever being reminded of them, they are surmounted by warning lights, to run upon them means presumptuous sin. Other perils, however, are hidden and almost unsuspected. We seek now to indicate several of these submerged reefs.

1. The quest of spiritual power whilst forgetting the uses of such power is one of the hidden rocks. Miss J. M. Fry made the following arresting statement at a religious gathering: 'Many persons are actuated by mere vanity in desiring the attainment of spiritual power.' That is, we presume, such power is sought not for the high ends of personal sanctification or effective ministry, but rather for its self-complacent possession. We understand how wealth may be desired for mere vanity—not with an appreciation of its uses, but out of the passion of possession and the desire for display. Intellectual power

[1] K. L. Parry.

may be coveted from the same motive. Men desire scholarship and skill for the sake of the pride and pleasure of them, for ends of personal self-sufficiency and distinction. And the attainment of spiritual power may be prompted in much the same spirit. Here pride refines itself into invisibility, and we find it difficult to believe in its presence. Spiritual power should be sought so that the ignoble elements of our nature may be effectually purged, that the sanctification of our faculties may be complete, and that all our work for God and man may be efficient. To lose sight of these practical uses is to fall into a subtle snare of refined selfishness and vanity.

2. The cultivation of character in the artistic spirit is a snare of the spiritual life. One of our writers justly observes: 'There are two kinds of artists, just as there are moral and spiritual souls. There are the trimmers, the superficialists, the amateurs, not loving beauty for itself, but for its advantages, socially and selfishly.' Wuttke, in discussing the morals of the Greeks, shows that in their reckoning the beautiful was the good; and that, in their opinion, man is moral in enjoying and creating the beautiful. They regarded the moral idea chiefly as an object of artistic enjoyment, and morality as a matter of mere spectacle. Does not this danger beset us—to cultivate holiness in the aesthetic spirit and as so much personal adornment? He who has understood the teaching of Christ never forgets that the good is the beautiful, and that the two must be sought in this order. He remembers that loveliness of character is first a question of essence and not of form. The sculptor brings the statue to perfection by fine measurements and delicate touches on the surface, but a noble human body is such by virtue of indwelling life, and health, and purity. The Greek sought moral excellence as in the studio of the sculptor; whilst in the school of Christ, which is the school of life, beauty of character is forgotten and found in the purity of the soul. To cultivate the virtues in an artistic temper, and as so much personal ornament, is to fall into serious error; in the power of a holy spirit we must achieve exterior grace. Harmony, beauty, and serenity of life spring from essential truth, purity, and love. Least of all must moral gracefulness be studied as a matter of mere spectacle. How we stand in the eye of God ought to be the dominant thought; and if we live in His sight clothed in wrought gold, we shall hardly be unlovely in the sight of those about us. To cultivate moral beauty in the spirit of art and fashion is to make shipwreck on the coral reef of a silver sea.

3. Sensuous enjoyment may insinuate itself into spiritual culture so as to become a peril. It might be thought that there is little to fear from sensuality in a fervent spiritual life; it would seem so essentially coarse and vulgar as not to be susceptible of concealment or decoration. But it is not so. With the Greeks the worship of Aphrodite lent to sensuality itself a religious sanction; and the Epistle before us makes manifest how soon the disciples of a far higher religion of love and beauty were in danger from the sensual side. Very plainly does St. Jude speak of gross passions, temptations, and sins. 'Strange flesh,' and suggestions of unnatural sin, come, in this Epistle, into strange association with godliness, spiritual enthusiasm, and that fellowship of love in which the primitive Church reached sublimity. A recent writer in discussing Sainte-Beuve and Chateaubriand, both of whom combined an ostentatious profession of religion with sexual licence, observes, 'We know, however, that erotic mania and religious mania are in some strange fashion allied alike in Protestant and Catholic communities.' The outcome of the high-pitched ideal of monasticism was often licentiousness; and the consecrated communities established by saints like Tersteegen were discredited by unseemly developments. It is true that 'we cannot have mountains without precipices,' and it is humbling and alarming to note that the love and purity of an exalted spiritual life may so easily pass into unhealthiness and sin. The 'love-feast' became an orgie, and the heavenly love of the individual saint may imperceptibly degenerate into dangerous sentimentalism and profane passion.

4. To cultivate fervent devoutness apart from practical life is another peril of the spiritual. Intense emotion, ecstatic song, fervent witness-bearing, impassioned contemplation, fellowship, and devotion soon become dangerous when severed from the facts and duties of daily life. Contact with the realities of the worldly life is necessary to the health and sanity of the soul, to the strength and soundness of our piety. We must keep in touch with human relations and responsibilities, we must at every step test our faith and feeling by their value in everyday life. Even when caught up into paradise we must not lose sight of commonplace duty and things. The kindling afflatus, the lyrical utterance, the solemn awe that dare not move, the lips touched with fire, are precious and delightful in their place and season; but the mystical and ecstatic, the vision and the rapture, must immediately and consistently blend with practical life if they are to leave us strong and safe.

¶ An immense mistake, fallen into by religious people of all ages, has been to suppose that emotion, carried to a sufficient height, was the real spirituality, and rendered all other gifts unnecessary. We find it in the Montanism of the second century; in the Gospellers of Germany in Luther's time; it has been a familiar feature in the English and American revivals. To be filled with the Spirit—which with these people meant a certain emotional exaltation—was everything and a substitute for everything.[1]

5. Talking too much about our spiritual life may prove detrimental to it. Testimony-bearing in the love-feast is a duty and joy, but it is easy to injure our deepest life by discussing it too freely and too frequently. A French critic writes: 'Beware of an artist who talks too well of his art. He wastes his art in talk.' And it is as certainly true in regard to religion. Men think that they are in saintship because they discuss it so admirably, and they waste in talk the reality and energy of grace; were they to think more and talk less they would be safer. Reticence and reality are close kin. There is much that is sacred and secret about the experiences of the soul, and it is dangerous to violate its delicacy. So we need vigilance on every side.

¶ There are things in religion not for common talk, which a delicate mind will no more thrust in than it will its heart's deepest affections. David says, 'Come near all ye that fear God: I will tell what He hath done for my soul.' Those that 'fear God' are invited, and they must 'come near.' Claudius says, 'My son, let not pietisers but pious men be thy companions.' The true fear of God in the heart is like the sun, which shines and warms though it does not speak; and what Johnson says of all conversation applies especially to that which is Christian: 'It is happiest when there is no competition and no vanity, but a quiet interchange of sentiments. . . . Much must depend on Christian temperament, much on circumstances; only let us never speak for display, and never be silent through fear.'[1]

[1] J. Brierley, *Faith's Certainties*, 151.

Autumn Trees.

Jude 12—'Autumn trees without fruit' (RV).

In the Revised Version of this verse the expressive phrase, 'Autumn trees without fruit,' takes the place of the obscure rendering, 'Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit.' The new rendering is a great gain. It presents, concisely and graphically, in words that cannot be misunderstood, the main thought of the writer. 'Autumn trees without fruit' are trees without fruit at the very time when they ought to be full of fruit. It has the further advantage of reproducing in a yet more striking and suggestive form, the accurate translation of the older English versions, as, for example, Wyclif's 'Harvest trees without fruit,' and Cranmer's 'Trees without fruit at the gathering time.'

1. An autumn tree without fruit is a grievous loss, a bitter disappointment to its owner. The pathos of this simple thought comes home

[1] John Ker, *Thoughts for Heart and Life*, 127.

to anyone who has ever watched a Continental peasant proprietor gazing sorrowfully upon his empty vines. The dreaded grape-mildew has seized upon his little patch of vineyard, and blighted his hopes of partaking in the harvest joy. Perhaps he has carried the very soil itself up the steep hills which lead to the terraces where the vines are planted; certainly he has toiled hard and long upon his vineyard, but hitherto he has toiled in hope. Now he knows that in vain has been all his painful labour, in vain his costly culture, in vain his patient waiting.

To the prophet Isaiah it was revealed that with like sorrow God looked upon Israel, His favoured vineyard. The Divine appeal sounds in our ears, and leaves us without excuse, if our lives are fruitless: 'What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?' (v. 4). Our vineyard is 'planted in a very fruitful hill': this is true even of those who blame their surroundings and say that if only they could be transplanted, their fruit would abound. Granted that circumstances are not equally favourable to us, nevertheless the fact remains that all around us, as we complain of the poverty of the soil, are those who are no better placed, and yet are putting us to shame by the quality and the quantity of the fruit which adorns their lives. Around our vineyard, too, the Lord has placed a 'fence' (v. 5). How great is the blessing of the fence! How much we owe to the gracious restraints of a Christian land, and of homes that are sanctified by the Word of God and by prayer! What a mercy that in the hour of temptation we are conscious that in doing wrong we have to climb a fence, to do violence to some warning voice of love.

¶ There is more cause for joy than for complaint in the hard and disagreeable circumstances of life. Browning said, 'I count life just a stuff to try the soul's strength on.' Spell the word 'discipline' with a final *g*—'discipling.' We are here to learn Time's lesson for Eternity's business. What does it signify if the circumstances about us are not of our choice, if by them we can be trained, learning the lessons of patience, fortitude, perseverance, self-denying service, acquiescence with God's will, and the hearty doing of it.[1]

2. An autumn tree without fruit is also a failure in itself, inasmuch as the great purpose of its existence is unfulfilled. In the natural world the end of all God's working is that the earth may yield her increase. For this the earth revolves, the seasons change, the sun shines, and the showers fall. In the spiritual world the purpose alike of God's creating love and of His redeeming grace is to make our lives fruitful. Failure here is failure complete and disastrous. Christ's true disciples glorify God by bearing much fruit (John xv. 8); that is to say, they live to God as they live to serve and bless their fellow-men.

Thou didst hang upon a barren tree,
  My God, for me:
Though I till now be barren, now at length,
  Lord, give me strength,
To bring forth fruit to Thee.

Thou didst bear for me the crown of thorn,
  Spitting and scorn:
Though I till now have put forth thorns, yet now
  Strengthen me Thou,
That better fruit be borne.

Thou Rose of Sharon, Cedar of broad roots,
  Vine of sweet fruits,
Thou Lily of the Vale with fadeless leaf,
  Of thousands Chief,
Feed Thou my feeble shoots.[2]

Edification.

Jude 20.—'Building up yourselves on your most holy faith.'

The figure employed in these passages is a figure which may be said to be characteristic of the vocabulary of Christianity. We all use it, and use it frequently, without distinctly recollecting that we are employing a figure. We all speak of edification—of the edification

[1] M. D. Babcock, *Thoughts for Every-Day Living*, 72.

[2] Christina G. Rossetti.

of the believer, of the edification of the Church —and almost forget that we are speaking, not of some transient effect of written or spoken words, but of that which implies effort, and labour, and time for its accomplishment. To edify is to build, and to build is a laborious task, and very often a slow task. The stones must be dug from the quarry. They must be brought to their place. They must be hewn into shapeliness and fitted with nicest skill into their several positions. They must be made to subserve the design of the builder, whether for the strength or the beauty of the building. And the builder himself must have his plan. He must work by method and in order. Above all, his foundation must be deep and broad and strong, if the superstructure is to be secure. This is true equally of the work of the spiritual builder, whether he be the builder of himself or the builder of others. Our Lord uses the figure of each man's own life. He tells us that we have each of us a house to rear, and he bids us see to it that we build on the true foundation. He warns us that the man who hears His sayings and does them not builds a house on the sand, to be swept away by the winds and waves. He teaches us that he who heareth and doeth, he who not merely calls Christ Lord, but renders Him a loving obedience, he, that is, who exercises care and forethought, and self-denial, and effort in following Christ, is building on a rock a house which no tempests can ever shake, an edifice which is reared for eternity. Similarly, St. Jude, addressing Christian believers, exhorts them to build their spiritual life on the true foundation. 'But ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.'

1. This edifice is not raised except through our co-operation. God does not work in us except as we work together with Him. He works in us by all the various instrumentalities which He employs; but He expects us to turn them to profitable use. We are not built as the dull stone and timber are built, passive in the hands of the mason and the carpenter. We have reasonable wills, we have the power of self-government, we can yield to or we can resist the influences which are brought to bear upon us. The hammer and the chisel may carve the rock of stone, but no graving-tool can carve a human heart into the grace of perfection which is in Christ Jesus. No teaching of the wisest teacher can of itself accomplish this transformation. The teacher may do much, no doubt. He may wield with skill and with energy the instrument which God has put in his hand. The truth may be powerful on his lips. He may warn, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. He may so preach Christ crucified for our sins and raised again for our justification that he shall stir and move the wayward heart. He may use every motive that can touch the secret springs of action. He may speak with power of the love of Christ: he may persuade men by the terrors of the Lord. But nevertheless, when all these agencies have been brought to bear, the living rational soul must do its part.

¶ Two years ago I was in California, and I went to a ranch where they raise roses the way they raise corn in Kansas, hundreds of acres of roses. One rather sentimental woman in the party picked up a beautiful rose, and as she held it in her hand said: 'O what wonderful roses God makes!' 'No,' said the canny Scotchman who was the chief gardener, 'God didna make that rose. This is the rose that God made,' and he picked up a scrawny little wild rose. 'This,' he said, picking up the beautiful rose, 'is one that God made with man's assistance.' [1]

2. In the next place, remember that it is a slow work, a gradual work. You cannot build yourselves up in a day, you cannot come to maturity at once. Have you ever seen the sculptor at work on the block of marble or of stone? Have you seen the first rough outline given, the almost shapeless shape of that which is afterwards to be the glory of the palace or the temple? Have you watched the careful, patient strokes of the chisel, which bring out the beautiful design, and then the repeated and delicate touches, so fine, so

[1] Philip Cook.

elaborate, so careful, by which at last the whole stands revealed in its marvellous grace and beauty? It is an image of the Christian life. To build up that life is always a hard work, always a trying work, always a work full of difficulty, always a work requiring much patience. There will be many disappointments, many delays, many failures even, before it can be completed; but certainly it will be a slow work, as all that is most excellent in God's world comes slowly to maturity.

¶ The masterpiece of Michael Angelo's life was the carving of a magnificent purpose. He was never satisfied. He was willing to plod and toil for seven long years, decorating the Sistine Chapel with his immortal 'Last Judgment' and 'Story of the Creation,' until the muscles and cords of his neck were forced into such rigidity that he could not look down without bending his body. For weeks at a time he carried his bread with him on the scaffold and worked while he ate, so that not a moment should be lost. For days his clothes remained upon his body and his eyes refused sleep. A block of marble was always in his sleeping-room. The chisel and mallet were ever ready, and the call of a new idea was never disobeyed. This was the man who immortalized himself in the world of art and yet, after he was three score years and ten, cried, 'I am learning! I am learning!' His education was never finished. His ambition was always ahead of him.[1]

3. But as it is a slow work and a weary work, so would it be a work which must only end in failure if we undertook it in our own strength. We are to build, but it is God and the word of His grace who build also. It is the life of His Spirit which gives us strength. It is He who worketh in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. 'Without me,' He tells us, 'ye can do nothing.' Apart from Him we shall build on the sand, and our building will be the laughing-stock of all beholders. Try for a single day to build in your own strength. Try to form and to carry out good resolutions. Try to exercise self-denial; try to read the Scriptures; try to pray; try to crucify some lust; try to overcome some besetting temptation; try to practise some virtue, and if you try to do any of these things in your own strength, you will fail miserably. Try to do all these things. Try with all your heart to fulfil in everything God's holy will. But remember it is His grace which must go before you that you may have a good will, and work with you when you have that good will.

¶ 'Without me ye can do nothing'; that is, which appertains to fruitbearing unto God. In things natural and civil we can do somewhat, and in things sinful too much; we need no aid or assistance for any such purpose. But in fruitbearing unto God we can do nothing.[1]

[1] Cortland Myers, *Making a Life*, 69.

Praying in the Spirit.

Jude 20.—'Praying in the Holy Ghost.'

This pregnant phrase wraps up a very solemnity of privilege. It is a great thing to pray in the mere presence of the Divine Spirit, or under His loving glance. It is a greater thing to pray with the vouchsafed assistance of this Divine One, as He moulds and energizes our petitions. It is a greater thing still, and enters the region of permanent miracle, that we should pray with the Eternal Spirit in us, abiding in our meagre hearts, identifying Himself with us, and mingling His own intercessions with ours. But the thought before us infolds each gem of this wondrous cluster, and transcends them all. We, and our prayer, and our praying—all are to be within Him, encompassed by His power, impregnated by His efficacy, informed by His light.

1. He whose soul is permeated by the presence and teaching of the Spirit will be kept from asking those things which are at variance with the counsels of the Most High. Strange and sacred restraints are cast about the believer whom He actuates, and no petty, foolish, self-seeking prayers will be likely to pass the lips. Where the influences of the Spirit are wanting, every kind of mistake is

[1] *The Golden Book of John Owen*, 187.

possible. Things frivolous and even hurtful are insatiably desired, and the prayers presented bear the stamp of unregeneracy. They express cowardice, luxuriousness, sordid ambition, envying, strife, and cannot bring blessing upon us; for it is vain to expect God to answer them if they voice our passions. In presence of the solemn and gigantic needs that should be the burden of a good man's prayers, these bastard prayers are an affront, an impertinence, and a shame. Now the Spirit will keep the prayers of those who are docile to His leadings, and who woo His gracious and unfailing ministries, from clashing with the holiness of the Divine nature, and the large and benign counsels of the Divine providence. Perhaps He may not always give to us explicit intimations of the temporal things which we may legitimately ask, for it is His purpose that we should develop a clear personal judgment, and He will always help and strengthen that. But we may boldly count upon His restraining us from prayers for things flatly out of harmony with the Divine will. Wherever the Spirit is honoured and discerned, He will prompt us to ask for what is supremely important, and will make us submissive to all the will of God. The nature possessed by those right and acceptable desires which are instilled into it by the Spirit will instinctively exclude what is false, foolish, and wrong from its prayers. The Holy Ghost brings its subjects into active and happy sympathy with the Divine plans, and makes that sympathy dominate every temper and act of devotion. From many a mortification and disappointment we shall be saved if we attain this high standard of privilege, for the soul saturated in the all-diffusive influences of the Spirit cannot pray amiss.

¶ The objection that prayer involves the dictation of man to God; that prayer, where it is answered, means the control of things by man's uninformed wishes, rather than by infinite wisdom, or by the reign of law, falls at once to the ground when we consider what true prayer really is. It is a travesty of the idea to suppose it means saying to God, 'Do this, or that'; 'Give me what I want'! For the genuine prayer comes in the first instance not from man, but from God Himself. It is the gracious circulation of Divine ideas through the human soul. It is the rain from heaven, falling upon this prepared soil, and springing up there in love, and trust, and holy resignation to a Will higher than itself. It is, as Goethe has somewhere put it, God seeking for Himself and meeting Himself in man. Prayer, at its truest, is not man having his way with God, but God having His way with man.[1]

2. The prayer upwinging itself through that special atmosphere with which the Holy Ghost enwraps the obedient soul is characterized by a sense of filial confidence. The grace of assurance it is His joy to bring makes the widest possible difference in the tone and quality of the devotional life. The Spirit brings men into that radiant cloud where the Son and the Father spake mysteries with each other that even the chosen three could not catch. It is just as much the work of the Spirit to signify our glad acceptance by the Father as it is of the sun to rain light and warmth upon every realm over which it hovers. The spirit cannot come from the God of love to a contrite soul without bringing tokens, pledges, intimations of God's forgiving love. He gives us access into an unshadowed grace in which we may stand to the very end; and if we retain this unfailing witness, we shall always be on speaking terms with God.

¶ It is a mystery that some men should pray at all, conscious as they are, not only of a startling moral interval between themselves and God, but of active alienation likewise. The efficacy of their efforts might seem to be almost as hopeless as throwing a bottled message into the sea in the hope that the bottle will be washed up on some distant shore and forwarded to its destination. Will the sealed missive be picked up by those who will pay the slightest heed to the scrawl of an alien writer? All the probabilities seem against it. But prayer, where there is the filial confidence inspired by an indwelling Spirit of witness, is like committing a letter to the care of some imperial power which rules the sea, and whose lines of communication have never been inter-

[1] J. Brierley, *Religion and To-Day*, 64.

rupted for a single day. The prayer of one who is without the Spirit is like the turning of the captive Jew to a distant and desolated shrine or a rueful mumbling at the wailing place, rather than a privileged interview at the mercy-seat;—an act in which there is more fear, misgiving and heartbreak than triumph. The Spirit of assurance brings us into conscious accord with God and His administrations, and makes us proprietors in the vast domain over which Jesus reigns. Prayer so strengthened is lowly love speaking into the ear of the infinite and eternal love.[1]

The Love of God.

Jude 21.—'Keep yourselves in the love of God.'

'THE love of God'; What wonderful words these are, and how little we can do to fathom their meaning. We read that 'God is love,' but we find that verse one of the hardest in the whole Bible to understand and to speak about. Its greatness, its wonderfulness baffle us. We shall be able to understand this new Testament description of the Divine nature better if we put alongside of it the Old Testament description. St. John tells us that 'God is love'; now compare with this what the old Psalmist said when he wrote, 'The Lord God is a sun.' Now God is love in the same way as the sun is radiance. What radiance is to the sun, that love is to God. Love is the expression of the Divine nature. As the radiance of the sun flows forth unbidden, boundless, unchanging, to brighten and gladden the world, so the love of God flows forth unbidden, illimitable, unchanging, eternal, to serve and bless all His creatures. And so what living in the sunshine is to the natural life, living in the love of God is to the spiritual life. Now, what are the characteristics of life in the sunlight? What are the marks of a sunshiny life?

1. Perhaps the most obvious, and the first one notices, is *joy*. Sorrow and darkness, light and joy, are almost interchangeable terms. When we awake on a bright sunny morning we involuntarily rejoice. A sudden burst of sunshine on a gloomy day will make the whole creation burst into song. Now one of the most obvious blessings of living in the love of God is joy. The heritage of joy that our Lord has bequeathed to us is immeasurable and inexhaustible. But it does not become ours unless we are living in the love of God. It is when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And so the amount of joy that we have will be a kind of measure of the extent to which we are living in the love of God.

¶ In Mr. Chesterton's new life of St. Francis of Assisi, he closes the story of St. Francis' death thus: 'The stars which passed above that gaunt and wasted corpse, stark upon the rocky floor, had for once in all their shining cycles round the world of labouring humanity looked down upon a happy man.' Christ taught Francis how to be glad.[1]

2. Another characteristic of life in the sunlight is *growth*. Growth occurs wherever there is life. But healthy vigorous life occurs only where there is plenty of light and heat. If we take the vegetable creation we find that the amount of growth is proportional to the amount of sunlight. The vegetation of the tropics is gigantic, of the poles dwarfed and stunted. And the same is true of the spiritual creation. What the sunlight does for the plant, the love of God does for the soul. It forms within us the graces of the Christian character. And one of the chief blessednesses of living in the love of God is that it secures for us constant, uninterrupted growth in likeness to Jesus Christ.

A door was opened in heaven;
And by desire made bold,
Forward I ran, and saw the Colours Seven,
Entangled as a rainbow caught in spray,
Over-arch the way,
Whence issued, pure, foam-white,
From fountain-springs of light,
The exhaustless love of the Lord.
(O rich reward
For poverty of yearning!)

[1] T. G. Selby.

[1] S. M. Shoemaker.

Glowing, burning,
I had felt the heats of the world's brilliance
pass;
As withered grass
They left me, scorched by the very glow.
Now penetrating
Through the last layers of the dusty clod
I call my soul, the love of God
Lover of lovers, came
Keen as a flame
Illuminating
By that strange spiritual brightness my
waste lands.
And lo,
The whole wide world did to my Lover sing
In colours; even the desert sands
Were quickened and were green, recovering
All in a moment verdure; and a rain
Mixed with the light, swept by, and cleansed
the air.[1]

3. Another blessing that comes from living in the sunlight is the blessing of *freedom from stumbling*. Jesus says, 'If any man walk in the night he stumbleth because there is no light in him.' Now if the light of God's sun can do that for a man in his literal walking, surely the love of God can do that for a man in his spiritual walking. Surely we may boldly paraphrase the word of our Lord and say, 'If any man walk in the love of God he stumbleth not.' But there is no ground for boasting in himself, for if he try to walk out of the love of God he stumbleth, for there is no light in him. The blessing of being kept from stumbling, and living a life in which all our ways are established, is reserved for those who keep themselves in the love of God.

Walk in the light: and sin, abhorred,
Shall ne'er defile again;
The blood of Jesus Christ thy Lord
Shall cleanse from every stain.

Walk in the light: and thou shalt find
Thy heart made truly His
Who dwells in cloudless light enshrined,
In whom no darkness is.

Walk in the light: and thou shalt own
Thy darkness passed away,
Because that light hath on thee shone
In which is perfect day.[1]

4. But the highest, the supreme blessing of all, is the blessing of fellowship with God. The analogy of the sunlight will again help us a little here. We have fellowship with our friends not in the darkness but in the light. 'If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' The supreme blessing of living in the love of God is this, that it means living in constant, unbroken, uninterrupted fellowship with God Himself. Life in the love of God is heaven begun on earth.

¶ I recall a bit of a poem I ran across in an old magazine somewhere. It was one of those vagrant, orphan poems with fine family lineaments that find their way unfathered into odd corners of papers. It told about a man riding on horseback through a bit of timberland in one of the cotton States of the South.

It was a bright October day, and he was riding along enjoying the air and view, when all at once he came across a bit of clearing in the trees, and in the clearing an old cabin almost fallen to pieces, and in the doorway of the cabin an old negress standing. Her back was bent nearly double with the years of hard work, her face dried up and deeply bitten with wrinkles, and her hair white. But her eyes were as bright as two stars out of the dark blue, it said.

And the man called out cheerily, 'Good-morning, Auntie, living here all alone?' And she looked up with eyes brighter yet with the thought in her heart, and in a shrill keyed-up voice, said, 'Jes' me 'n' Jesus, massa.' But he said a hush came over the whole place; there seemed a halo about the old broken-down cabin; and he thought he could see Somebody standing by her side looking over her shoulder at him, and His form was like that of the Son of God.[2]

[1] Amy Wilson Carmichael, *Made in the Pans*, 67.

[1] Bernard Barton.
[2] S. D. Gordon, *Quiet Talks on Service*, 23.

A Benediction.

Jude 24, 25.—'Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever.'

THE differences between the Authorized and Revised Versions are all suggestive. 'Guard you from stumbling' sounds stronger than 'Keep you from falling,' but the thought is rather of the obstacles that strew the path, and of the need of continual warning and direction. 'Set you before the presence of his glory' indicates not presentation before a king, but the termination of a journey, the accomplishment of a purpose. 'Without blemish'—not merely cleansed from sin, or even free from blame, but unharmed by the perils through which you have passed. 'In exceeding joy'—'in' instead of 'with' marks clearly that the joy is yours. The original suggests leaping for joy, a triumphant gladness that cannot be restrained. 'To the only God'—'wise' is rightly omitted. Mark the connection of this with 'our Saviour.' Compare ver. 4, 'our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.' 'Before all time, and now, and for evermore'—the complete expression for eternity—past, present, future.

The doxology includes Preservation, Presentation, and Praise.

1. *Preservation.*—'Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling'—such is the force of the original. Jude must have been playing on words here. There is a beautiful correspondence in the Greek that does not appear in the English. There are two words that are very much alike—they are, indeed, composed of the same consonants and the same vowels. One means apostasy, or a final falling away from God; the other means free from stumbling. The writer, who has been dealing in this whole Epistle with apostasy, says now, 'God is not only able to keep you from the apostasy from which I warned you, but He is able even to keep you free from stumbling.' The English supplies no two words sufficiently alike to show the beautiful resemblance in the words here used. We might venture, perhaps, to render it so as to hint this likeness—'God is not only able to keep you free from a fall, but he is able to keep you free from a fault'; or again, we might express it by two similar phrases—'God is able not only to keep you from falling from the way, but he is able to keep you from stumbling in the way.'

Now all experience testifies that we cannot keep ourselves from falling. Not even the ripest saint can. We might as well speak of an unattached vessel remaining, by its own strength, suspended in mid-air as of a Christian standing firm if he loses a close connection with Christ. It is a great truth that we are 'kept through faith unto the salvation ready to be revealed'; but there is a deeper truth than that. Our faith itself needs a keeper, else we shall lose it in a day. And we cannot keep each other from falling, though our pleadings and example and prayers may help. Even angel-hands are not strong enough to keep us from falling: some angels could not keep themselves. But there is One who can, though only One. It was said of Eliakim (Isa. xxii. 22, 25), whom Christ referred to as an illustration of Himself (Rev. iii. 7), 'I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place, and they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, and all the vessels, from the vessels of cups even to the vessels of flagons.' Now, vessels thus hung upon the nail hang not upon their own strength, but by the strength of the nail: and if the nail is needed for the small vessels, it is needed equally for the large. It may be flattering to our pride to think of ourselves as 'vessels of flagons,' and not small 'vessels of cups'; but if so, we need the reminder that we can no more keep ourselves from falling than the smallest can. The larger the vessel is, the more it must depend upon the strength of the nail. But Christ is verily the 'nail fastened in a sure place,' and, hanging on Him, all the vessels of the Lord's house will be kept from falling, be their weight or their fragility what it may.

There is no necessity that a Christian should fall. His life might be one of joy and victory every day, if only from hour to hour of every day he trusted Christ to hold him up. But

there is no Christian who does not often fall, and who, if all depended on himself, would not fall utterly: for neither shame for the past nor resolves for the future will keep us in the hour of temptation without a conscious clinging to Christ.

He went out clean, and sound as a bell,
And Death was kind;—and yet . . . he fell.

He did great deeds; he bore him well;
High honour his;—and yet . . . he fell.

He passed unscathed through shot and shell,
And unafraid;—and yet . . . he fell.

Men everywhere his fame did tell,
And sang his praise;—and yet . . . he fell.

Naught could the gifts of fate excel;
His cup brimmed full;—and yet . . . he fell.

Who cannot his own passions quell,
Falls from God's grace;—and so . . . he fell.[1]

2. *Presentation.*—The word 'present' means 'set' or 'place,' as when one, having finished some great work or piece of art, sets it in some conspicuous place to be seen of all; as we read, 'that he might present it to himself a glorious church' (Eph. v. 27); or as we read again, 'I will set him on high, because he hath known my name' (Ps. xci. 14).

(1) *Of whom.*—Of those who have been kept—kept for this end, that they might be presented. They were once sinners, perhaps among the worst; perhaps those who were pulled out of the fire; reclaimed backsliders as well as consistent saints, with nothing in their original history or character to give them any claim to the keeping or the presentation; obscure on earth, perhaps; of small esteem; men of afflictions, necessities, distresses, perhaps of stripes and imprisonments; men with 'thorns in the flesh,' and buffeted by 'Satan's messengers' yet 'kept' in the midst of all these, nay, 'presented' at last without spot or wrinkle, or any trace of their earthly tribulation and shame, God wiping away all tears from their eyes. It is 'the kept' who are presented.

[1] J. Oxenham, *The King's High Way*, 89.

(2) *By whom.*—They are presented by Him who kept them,—by 'the only God our Saviour.' Jesus keeps, Jesus presents; it is with Him that we have to do from first to last, if, indeed, we can speak of 'last' in reference to a glory that is for ever. He leads us in at the strait gate; He leads us along the narrow way; He leads us into the paradise of God; He leads us up to the throne, there to exhibit us as the trophies of His wisdom, and power, and love.

(3) *Where.*—They are presented before the presence of His glory. The glory dwelt in the innermost shrine; and into the presence of that glory the Redeemer carries those whom He has kept. No outer court will do for such a presentation. Jewels such as these are fit for the royal palace; no meaner place will do; no place less holy, less heavenly, will suffice. It is His glory before which we are to be set—the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father; the glory of the holy of holies—a glory which shall shed down its eternal radiance upon those who are thus kept and thus presented, changing them into the same image from glory to glory, in that realm where all is glory, and from which every trace of imperfection shall have vanished, leaving nothing behind but what is divinely fair and perfect.

(4) *How.*—In two respects: 'faultless' and 'with exceeding joy.' And are not these the two perfections of eternity?

(*a*) '*Faultless.*'—It is *amōmos* here, internally pure and unblemished; not simply unchallengeable in law. This is the perfection of holiness in store for those whose name from the first has been 'saints of God.' Without any inward stain or blemish; without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Legally and judicially this faultlessness becomes ours when we believe; but internally and morally it is reserved for a more perfect day. Yet let us keep in mind that it is written, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.' The day of spotlessness and perfection is at hand; and how will the light of that day display the utter vanity of those ideas of present perfection and holiness in which many boast themselves?

(*b*) '*With exceeding joy.*'—The word is a

strong one, like that of the Old Testament, 'leaping for joy.' This is St. Peter's 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.' This is what David sang of: 'In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.' The days of the mourning of these saints are ended. This is the day of resurrection, and therefore they are glad. It is the day of the Master's long looked-for appearing, and therefore they are glad. It is the day of reunion with the dear and lost, and therefore they are glad. It is the day of the Lamb's marriage, and the Bridegroom's coronation, and therefore they are glad. Then that shall come to pass which is written, 'With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter the King's palace' (Ps. xlv. 12-15). They 'shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away' (Isa. xxv. 10).

3. *Praise.*—This is comprised in four well-known words, 'glory' and 'majesty,' 'dominion' and 'power.' All excellency, personal and official, regal and priestly, is here ascribed to 'the only God our Saviour.' Of these words of praise which make up this Divine anthem each contains something special, which it is difficult exactly to define or fully to unfold; and all of them taken together make up a doxology to whose vast compass no voice or instrument can give full effect, even in the heaven of heavens. Similar doxologies are found in the Psalms (Ps. cxlv. 3-13); and in the Revelation (ch. iv. 9-11, v. 12, 14, vii. 12).

Here notice just one thing. The glory and majesty, dominion and power, are ascribed to God because He is our Saviour and able to keep us from stumbling, and to 'present us faultless before his glory.' That is to say, the Divine manifestation of Himself in the work of redemption is the highest of His self-revealing works. Men are not presumptuous when they feel that they are greater than sun and stars; and that there is more in the narrow room of a human heart than in all the immeasurable spaces of the universe, if these are empty of beings who can love and inquire and adore. And we are not wrong when we say that the only evil in the universe is sin. Therefore, we are right when we say that high above all other works of which we have experience is that miracle of love and Divine power which can not only keep such feeble creatures as we are from stumbling, but can present us stainless and faultless before the Throne of God.

What are these lovely ones, yea, what are these?
Lo, these are they who for pure love of Christ
Stripped off the trammels of soft silken ease,
Beggaring themselves betimes, to be sufficed
Throughout heaven's one eternal day of peace:
By golden streets, thro' gates of pearl unpriced,
They entered on the joys that will not cease,
And found again all first fruits sacrificed.
And wherefore have you harps, and wherefore palms,
And wherefore crowns, O ye who walk in white?
Because our happy hearts are chanting psalms,
Endless Te Deum for the ended fight;
While thro' the everlasting lapse of calms
We cast our crowns before the Lamb our Might.

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

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